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S. ROBERT TRALINS

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About the author:

S. Robert Tralins is the author of 67 books under his own name and three pennames. He is the "ghostwriter" of several biographies which were national best-sellers. He is well known for his research into the occult, ESP and mnemonics, and his work in the fields of psychology and antiquities. For diversion Mr. Tralins reads, paints, and plays blindfold chess.

STRANGE EVENTS BEYOND HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

S. ROBERT TRALINS

ACE BOOKS, INC.
1120 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10036

*There was no reason for the mother to worry about her son, working at the shipyard 190 miles away. Suddenly she got a feeling she could not explain. She picked up the phone and called the yard foreman directly. *Her call saved her son from a horrible death . . .*

*All the firemen liked the friendly youngster who hung around the fire station hero-worshipping. Then he disappeared. When he turned up again, it was to alert them to a near-fatal fire. Later, when they tried to thank him, *they learned that he had died in an accident weeks ago . . .*

*The two U.S. soldiers were cut off from their platoon during World War II and knew that the end had come. Then an American tank lumbered into range and helped them get away. But there were no tanks for miles around, and *no one else had seen it or knew where it had come from . . .*

These stories are true. They are but a sampling of the authenticated, documented stories in this book, so provocative and challenging as to make the thinking reader ask just how firmly we are rooted in scientific reality after all.

"It is to be expected that there are those who scoff at or deny the existence of supernatural occurrences, since this is far easier for them than it is to provide adequate, sensible answers."

S. Robert Tralins
STRANGE EVENTS
BEYOND HUMAN
UNDERSTANDING

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK was created as the direct result of a weird experience that happened to me thirty-one years ago when I was a boy of eight.

That uncanny event, in which I was miraculously spared from being crushed to death beneath the huge wheels of a ten-ton coal truck, *was* of a supernatural nature.

Moreover, the eerie circumstances which took place on the wintry November night before the accident and those which occurred afterwards, served as irrefutable evidence that what had happened to me was of some ethereal origin, testimony to the fact that there *are* supranatural forces in existence beyond the zone of human understanding!

It was this singular experience in my life that started me on my research into the whys and wherefores of the phenomena of physical and extra-sensory perception. Later, other strange and unexplainable things happened during my life which continued to impel me on in my search for the answers to the unexplainable events which continue to baffle mankind.

This book contains a faithful chronicle of many of the unearthly encounters others have experienced. As far as could be determined through my research efforts down through the years, the facts are true and the accounts of these often frightful events were told by reliable persons whose reputations are unquestioned.

All but several of the accounts published here have never before been seen in print.

As to whether or not these happenings are physical, spiritual, superphysical or nonhuman and of unearthly origins, who can say with certainty? Modern science is still in the

dark regarding the phenomena such as is illustrated in this work; hence it is to be expected that there are those who scoff at or deny the existence of supernatural occurrences, since this is far easier for them than it is to provide adequate, sensible answers.

Even the famed Dr. J. B. Rhine of Duke University, who has been conducting a unique research program into ESP (Extra-sensory perception) has been frequently subjected to ridicule, as have other serious investigators studying these strange fields. At the risk of being laughed at also, I hereby present my findings and stake my reputation as the author of more than sixty published books and more than a thousand articles and stories, that there really *are* supernatural forces beyond the understanding of man.

S. Robert Tralins, Miami, 1966

THE STRANGE VISIONS OF ANNIE BAHAMY

On a wintry November night in 1934, our beloved Negro maid, Annie Bahamy, came into my room to make certain that I was warm enough and fully covered. But when she saw me standing at the window, shivering, watching the driving snow bury the Maryland countryside within view of our house, she cried out in alarm and sent me scurrying into bed.

After she had tucked me in under the featherbed covering, she sat down in the squeaky rocker beside the kerosene stove and smiled.

"Robert," she said with the rosy glow of fire from the isinglass window illuminating her cheeks, "you and me, we is going to talk. Now you know better'n that. I told you a hundred times before, you'll get double-pneumonia standing on that cold linoleum in your bare feet. I want you to promise that you won't do that no more, you hear?"

I clearly remember how I had shivered under the covers and rubbed the soles of my icy feet as I asked, "Annie, why're you always fussing about everything I do?"

When she answered, her voice was hushed and her eyes glistened. "Cause I'm here to look after you, that's why. Cause your momma and poppa is stuck over in Baltimore in a big snow pile and they won't be back until maybe four o'clock in the morning."

"How do *you* know that?" I said, making an attempt to tease her, but shaking all over from an uncanny feeling of awe.

She shrugged. "I just knows, that's all. Now you hush, Robert. Go on to sleep. I'll sit right here a spell and nap some."

"Tell me a story, Annie?" I asked, knowing that she would refuse because it was so late.

"Hush, child," she said, closing her eyes.

I remained silent, peeking out of the covers at her, watching the reflection of the heater's flames dance upon her ruddy face. I kept wondering how Annie knew that my parents were snowbound. Finally I was not able to contain my curiosity any longer.

"Annie?" I called.

She mumbled something incoherent but did not open her eyes.

"*Annie?*"

Again she muttered something unintelligible. The way she looked just then and the way she continued to keep her eyes closed sent little shivers of fright through me. Despite my chattering teeth, I hopped out of bed and gingerly moved toward her. I touched her hand cautiously. She did not move.

Even now as this is being written, I remember the strange expression on her face just as vividly as if I had seen her last night. Then I crawled onto her lap and she put her arms protectively around me.

"Annie?" I asked. "Where're mother and dad right now?"

"They's in a pile of snow and your daddy's cussing to beat the band, digging out the snow and putting chains on the wheels. They's way over there near Johnnycake Road at the place near where we all had that picnic last summer, over by the horse stables."

Her voice sounded eerily hollow and as I lay in her arms listening to her heavy breathing, I began to grow aware of a strange sensation of transport, as if the rocking chair was no longer stationary on the floor.

I remembered the place Annie spoke about and recalled how we'd picked blackberries there in the fields beyond the stables. I started to ask if she remembered about the blackberries and at the same time leaned over to see why I felt so peculiar, why the chair wasn't rocking despite my efforts to make it.

As usual, Annie's feet were wrapped in old cloths which she had bound about her ankles and then tucked into a pair of my father's old slippers. Then I noticed that her feet were *not* on the floor. Her legs were extended straight out, inches above the linoleum in midair.

Kneeling on her lap, I put a hand on her arm and tried to set the rocker into motion. It refused to budge. Although this had been a favorite game of mine, rocking the chair while sitting on her lap, I could not understand why the chair would not move then.

I shook her and asked why.

And that was when I noticed her eyes. They were wide open and she was staring straight ahead. She appeared to be seeing beyond the walls.

"Annie!" I cried, but she did not answer. Her lips moved and huge drops of perspiration began to appear on her forehead. Suddenly I was paralyzed with fear, thinking that maybe she was dead. I remained where I was, unable to tear my gaze from her face.

Then another strange thing happened. Annie's mouth fell open as if she was about to say something. After a long while I grew aware of an increasing sense of motionlessness.

Then, I realized what it was. She had stopped breathing! Just at that moment she began to speak.

"Robert. I'm going downstairs to iron your new BVDs cause it won't look nice a'tall when them doctors and nurses at St. Agnes Hospital examines you tomorrow mawning.

"You is going to get run over by a great big old coal truck at Winter's Lane and Edmondson Avenue and they's gonna examine you all over and it won't look nice if you ain't got your new clean BVDs on. After they bring you home, your daddy's gonna go right out and buy you them electric trains you always been wanting. I'm gonna have to make up the bed in the guest room cause your Uncle Frank is gonna come by tomorra night. Don't you let him play with your electric trains, you hear?"

Abruptly, the chair dipped forward and started to rock. Annie closed her eyes and began to breath heavily. I shook her but she still wouldn't wake up, so I sat there for a while, listening to her breathing and thinking about what she'd just said. When the impact of her words suddenly hit me, I leapt down and returned to the featherbed in a wild rush.

At the crack of dawn the next morning I was up and hurriedly dressing, shivering in the cold, looking out of the window at the freshly fallen snow. Annie came in, seized my ear, and with a wash cloth and the basin of warm water she'd brought, she proceeded to wash me thoroughly.

As she did so, she hummed to herself and muttered something about how it would be a God-awful shame if I was to have such a black ring around my neck and dirty feet when they examined me later that day at the hospital.

I laughed and told her she was just trying to scare me so I'd let her wash me. Then she grabbed me by the shoulders and with an intent look in her eyes, said, "Don't you say that, Robert, honey. I ain't never been wrong yet during

my spells. Now you hush and put on this nice clean suit of BVDs I ironed."

After I had put the long underwear on, she saw to it that I put on an extra pair of woolen socks. I protested at this, but she clucked her tongue and said, "Now you won't get no cold feet when you go tramping around in that snow. And when you put on your high top boots, ain't no coal truck in this world gonna break your legs."

When I arrived in the kitchen a few minutes later, my mother was just setting out the bowls of oatmeal for my father and me. I climbed onto the wooden kitchen chair with the green paint flecking off it. "Annie told me about how you were stuck in the snow last night over by the stables on Johnnycake Road," I blurted.

My father dropped his spoon. He looked at mother in amazement and then gaped at me. Mother spoke first. "How'd Annie know *that*?"

I shrugged and pushed my spoon into the cereal. "How should *I* know? She told me last night."

My parents exchanged glances of astonishment. My father frowned and asked, "She told you that last night?"

"Yes, sir."

"What else did she say?"

I shrugged. "Oh, nothing. How it was over near the place where we picked those blackberries last summer. How you were cussing while you dug the snow out from under the tires to put on the chains and all."

My mother laughed and my father frowned. Then they called Annie.

When she shuffled in a moment later, she hummed to herself and took command of the kitchen as she always did. She turned to my mother and said, "Now sit yourself down, Miss Rose, honey. I'll get your breakfast."

"Annie?" my father asked. "How'd you know we were stuck in a snowdrift last night?"

Busy with the coffee pot, Annie did not look up. She poured the steaming coffee into their cups and said with a note of annoyance in her tone, "Never mind that none. Eat your breakfast. You gonna be late opening the store."

"I'm going to drive Robert to school this morning. The bus isn't running," my father announced, rising from the table and getting his coat and overshoes. "I've got to start the car and let it warm up."

"Ain't gonna do no good," Annie stated.

My father blinked at her. "How's that?"

Annie busied herself with the skillet at the stove. She did not turn to face him as she said, "That old Ford's frozen stiff and you ain't gonna get it started. Robert's gonna walk to school." Five minutes later my father could be heard outside the kitchen door stomping the snow off his feet and coming inside. As he angrily hung up his coat and removed his galoshes, he said, "Annie was right. Robert, you'd better get going. The car won't turn over."

I started to say something about what else Annie had told me the night before, but she caught my eye and held a finger up to her lips, warning me to be silent. I didn't get it and I frowned, but she made a face and I hurriedly finished my cereal.

A few minutes later as Annie knelt beside me, putting on my overshoes as I buttoned my mackinaw, she whispered, "Don't you tell your momma and poppa 'bout what I told you last night during my fit, you hear?"

"Why not?" I wanted to know.

"Cause your momma is pregnant and it's bad to worry her. And cause in the second place your poppa is gonna holler at me, at you, and at her. But don't you worry none. Your old Annie is looking out after you, Robert honey. I ain't gonna let nothing hurt you. I promise."

The excitement of walking to school in the snow took my mind off the warning Annie had given me. After both of my parents had thoroughly lectured me on being careful and waiting for the traffic lights, I started out for school, carrying my bookbag and smelling the fried-egg sandwiches which were securely tucked inside with my third-grade reader and notebook.

When I reached Catonsville's Winter's Lane and Edmondson Avenue, I stopped and looked both ways. The street was packed solidly with snow. The red light was on for the Edmondson Avenue traffic, but no cars or other vehicles were anywhere in sight. When I had the green light, and when I was sure no vehicles were in sight, I stepped gingerly off the curb, went around a snowbank and again looked both ways. Then I started across the street.

All of a sudden, from out of nowhere, a speeding coal truck came roaring at me.

To this day I have been unable to understand why I hadn't seen that truck, or where it came from. The only possible place it could have come from was an alley several hundred feet down the block.

There wasn't time to get out of the way. I could not cry

out or jump back because the gigantic front end of the huge truck was almost upon me.

Suddenly, I was aware of my bookbag hurtling through the air. Something seized me in a fierce, blanketing, smothering grasp.

I was aware of nothing except a blur of motion. I did not feel a thing, not even the slightest pain. Nor did I have any other sensations, of terror or anything like that, except the comforting, somewhat stifling feeling that something, like a snowy featherbed, had enveloped me.

"My bookbag, my bookbag," was all I kept crying out.

The police were there and a few people were standing around.

One man was yelling excitedly. "I saw the whole thing. The truck was doing at least sixty. The boy didn't have a chance. He had the green light. The truck was running through the red light. Bumper struck the kid's head. *Both* front and back wheels ran him completely over."

Though I didn't feel any pain, they wouldn't let me stand up. A few minutes later they took me to the St. Agnes Hospital.

My father arrived shortly thereafter and I listened as the doctor told him, "It's a miracle the boy wasn't crushed. We've never seen anything like this before. The only marks on his body are the tire treads on his right thigh. The police said it was a ten-ton truck, loaded with coal. They said that both the front and double rear tires passed over his body."

After I had been thoroughly examined and X-rayed, my father took me home and I was put to bed. Later that afternoon, my father's brother, Uncle Frank, came over, bringing a set of new electric trains which he helped me set up. I remembered Annie's warning about letting him play with the trains; but, because I was so grateful at having them, and because he had brought them at my father's request, I did not try to stop him from playing with them.

That was when Annie's other warning came true. My uncle accidentally broke one of the cars, and after he attempted to fix it, the trains never ran again.

What is even more baffling than the strange experiences through which I'd gone, which had been foretold with such uncanny accuracy during Annie Bahamy's "vision fit" of the previous night, was the sudden *disappearance* of Annie herself.

Shortly after I had started out for school that morning,

Annie vanished into thin air! She was never seen again—by us, at any rate.

My mother went up to her room and searched throughout the house, but Annie was nowhere to be found. Her clothing and winter coat and galoshes were in her room. As far as we could see, she had taken nothing with her.

The only trace of her were her footsteps leading out of the house into the fresh snow, footsteps that ended abruptly in the center of the yard!

All Annie's friends and fellow church members who had known her during the past eight years, when she had moved to Catonsville to live with us, were at a loss to understand what had happened to her.

To this day I have never been able to fathom this strange mystery and the uncanny manner in which my life had been so miraculously spared. I have never been able to unravel the mystery of *what* had shielded my frail body from certain death that wintry morning in November, nor was I able to determine *how* it had been possible for dear old Annie Bahamy to "know" that my parents had been stuck in a snowdrift, or to foretell exactly what was about to happen to me.

My mother, of course, *knew* Annie had had something to do with the sparing of my life. But, if she knew anything else about Annie's strange "vision fits", she never spoke of them.

THE SPECTRE WITH THE GOLD TEETH

When the Sandoz family moved into the old house overlooking the ancient walled city of Cartagena, the capitol of Colombia, South America, they could not understand why such a stately old house had been vacant for so many years. They also were at a loss to know why every tenant who had moved in only remained for a day or two, and then had hastily moved out. Furthermore, Señor Elpidio Sandoz, the chemical exporter who had bought the house for his family, could not understand why he had got such a bargain.

But Señor Sandoz, his wife, and lovely daughter, Maria, were soon to learn why.

On the first night they were in the house, Maria awakened feeling a chill dank wind blowing upon her face. It was a musty breeze, strongly reminiscent of an ancient tomb

her girlfriends had once dared her to enter when she was away at the convent school.

At any rate, she had awakened with a start and that was when she first saw "something."

At first she could not make it out. There seemed to be a figure in the room, standing at the foot of her bed. It was glowing somewhat like phosphorus and seemed to be materializing into a recognizable form as she stared at it in wide-eyed terror.

Then she saw it plainly. It was a man, dressed in the clothes of the late 19th century. He was bearded and he seemed to be peering at her while beckoning, as if motioning for her to get out of bed and follow him. The most awesome thing about the figure was a grin that showed the dazzling bright golden color of its teeth!

Maria found her voice and shrieked. Her bloodcurdling screams brought her father and mother into her room in a mad rush.

They saw no one there.

It took a long while for them to calm down the hysterical girl, who finally told them what she had seen.

Elpidio Sandoz smiled and told his daughter that she had merely had a nightmare. She had been listening to too many foolish stories about the bearded old man who had once owned the house.

"But, father," Maria protested. "The girl next door told me that the old man died in this *very* room. I tell you it was he I saw."

They tried to laugh it off, but Maria was too insistent. Finally, they relented and changed rooms with her. Nothing more occurred that night.

The next night, at the same hour, Señor and Señora Sandoz were jolted awake by the terrorstruck screams of their daughter. They rushed into Maria's bedroom and found her chattering with fright, her face as pale as the sheets on her bed, her hands ice cold.

Again Maria insisted that she had seen the appraition.

This time Elpidio and his wife did not know what to believe. Nor did they know what to do. While it was true that the Sandoz business was prosperous, he was far from being wealthy enough to abandon a house he had just purchased. And who would be foolish enough in the light of these events, to buy it from him?

After quieting Maria down, they decided to wait one more day before doing anything. If the spectre was seen

again, and there was no reason why they should not have believed their daughter, they would call the priest.

Precisely at two A.M. the next night Maria woke up screaming. Elpidio, who had been worried, was sitting up beside Maria's door.

At the first sound of her outcries, he burst into the room. He saw nothing except his daughter sitting up in bed, clutching the bedclothes to her throat and pointing at the foot of her bed.

Maria then leapt out of bed and rushed into her father's arms. As she did so, Elpidio felt a cold breeze move by him. His nostrils tingled from the musty odor. There was no doubt in his mind now. His daughter had really seen something!

On the fourth night the parish priest was summoned. After he had been told of the strange apparition, he suggested that Maria should not cry out the next time, but should instead, follow the spectre's beckoning hand.

"In this city, since it was founded in 1533," the priest told Maria, "many strange things have taken place. All I can tell you to do is to trust in God and fear not. We will all be here watching over you. It is obvious that the figure you continue to see wants you to follow him."

With her heart in her mouth, Maria finally consented.

That night, at two in the A. M. Elpidio and the priest, with Maria's mother hovering behind them, peered into the bedroom.

Almost at once they all shrank back. The chill wind with its musty odor could be felt upon their faces. Then they smiled their surprised outcries, for Maria was getting out of bed, her eyes fixed in a terrified gaze at something which was invisible to them.

The priest held Elpidio and his wife back as Maria slowly left her bedroom and walked down the corridor which led to the garden, around which the house walls were constructed.

A few minutes later they saw Maria stop in the center of the garden. She turned and looked toward the priest and her parents.

"It's—it's gone. He pointed to the ground right here and then vanished."

Elpidio and his wife embraced their daughter, noticing that she seemed her old self again. The priest asked, "Have you a spade?"

While Elpidio dug, Maria held the flashlight and the

priest and her mother looked on. Then the shovel struck something metallic. Elpidio dug hurriedly and soon withdrew a small chest from the hole.

They opened it hastily and gasped in surprise. It was filled with gold pesos. Also in the chest was a small tintype photograph.

When the priest held the picture up to the flashlight, Maria cried, "That's him! That's the spectre."

There was no doubt in Maria's mind that the apparition she had seen, which had led her to the treasure trove, was the spirit of the man in the photo. The man in the picture was bearded. And what was even more noticeable were his smile and the bright gold teeth.

Why the apparition had appeared only to Maria and not to her parents and the priest will never be known.

The spectre was never seen in the Sandoz' home again.

APPARITION ON A JUNGLE HIGHWAY

HILMA R. who is a prominent educator from Panama, Central America, received word from a relative that her cousin, a young woman with whom she had been especially close since childhood, was seriously ill.

Since it was difficult on such short notice to charter a plane from Balboa to take her the 130 Kilometres north to Agua Dulce where her cousin lived, Hilma decided to drive. But the trip was neither a safe nor a pleasant one for a young woman to make alone, at night, through the untamed, unsettled wilds of the Panamian jungle. There was no telling what could happen. A breakdown on a little-traveled jungle road in the daytime was a harrowing enough experience, but what if her car should break down at night?

When her friends, fellow school teachers with whom she lived, heard of Hilma's plans, they tried to dissuade her.

"Why not wait until the morning when you might be able to charter a plane?"

Hilma bit her lip and nodded vigorously. "No. There isn't time. I have the feeling that this might be the last time I'll ever see Consuelo alive. I must go now. Tonight."

"Then we'll go with you," her friends decided. "We had no idea that she was so gravely ill. Were you told she is dying?"

Hilma blinked back the tears that threatened. "No. They didn't say."

"But how do you know she's—*dying*?"

"I just know. I can't tell you why or how I know. I just sense it."

The grave look in Hilma's eyes and the sound of her voice conveyed to them the impact of her conviction. Hurriedly, the women began to pack a few things and make preparations for the journey.

Although they did not particularly look forward to such a trip at that time of the year, the rainy season, they had made up their minds that Hilma was not to go alone. They contrived little jokes to cheer Hilma up, since she appeared to be extremely upset. Furthermore, they knew that they were doing the best thing by insisting that they go along because there *was* the possibility that Hilma's cousin was gravely ill and was dying, and therefore, their presence at such a time would be genuinely needed.

They could not know that Hilma's feeling that this was the last time she was ever to see Consuelo again would be confirmed.

The inky blackness of the Panamian jungle swallowed them in its silence as Hilma drove along the narrow highway, peering through the windshield as kilometre after kilometre unwound behind them. It was like driving through a dark and mysterious tunnel with a thousand unseen dangers lurking beyond. The three women riding in the car with Hilma laughed and made jokes about who would get out to fix a tire if they had a flat.

Eventually they reached San Carlos, the last settlement before their destination, without incident. They stopped for a cup of coffee and to have the car serviced, then resumed their journey.

It was eleven P.M.

At twelve-fifteen Hilma suddenly began to slow the car.

"What are you stopping for?" someone asked.

Hilma, peering intently through the windshield into the swirling black mist beyond the range of the headlights, whispered in a frightened tone, "Something's up ahead. It seems to be blocking the road."

The four women strained to peer into the gloom. The car slowed to a crawl as Hilma cautiously drove toward the thing that seemed to be barring their way.

Suddenly, she cried out and jammed on the brakes.

The women in the car gasped in disbelief, as their hands

crept stealthily to make certain that the doors to the ca were locked securely.

Before them, in the headlight's glare, they saw an in credible sight.

The figure of a young woman, wearing a full length dress ing gown, was lying on her back in the center of the road her hands folded upon her breast. Although she seemed to glow, she was at the same time transparent.

Suddenly, the apparition appeared to float above the road. It hung suspended, as if resting upon the upper rang of the headlights, then moved into the inkiness beyond and vanished.

When Hilma found her voice she whispered, "It was Consuelo! I tell you it was Consuelo!"

One of her companions made a note of the time. It was exactly twelve-sixteen. They were certain of that.

They checked their mileage and one of the women took over the driving. There were only a few remaining kilometres to travel before they reached Agua Dulce.

It was nearly two when they arrived at the modest home where Hilma's relatives lived. They parked and got out of the car. The lights in the house were on and the heart rending sound of weeping reached their ears. Hilma led the way inside.

Someone said, "Consuelo is dead."

Hilma whispered, "I know."

All eyes turned to her. Her own eyes were fixed straight ahead on the bier where Consuelo's body rested. She was wearing the same full-length dressing gown Hilma and her friends had seen on the apparition.

The women behind Hilma gasped as they recognized the dead girl. The apparition they had seen and the corpse upon which they were now gazing were one and the same.

In a hollow voice that was edged with awe, the woman who had checked her watch said, "She died at sixteen minutes past twelve."

Hilma's relatives looked at her in disbelief. "Why, that's right. How on earth did *you* know?"

There was no point in explaining.

How it was possible for Hilma and her three companions to see the image of Consuelo precisely at the moment of her death many miles away, or *why* it was so, cannot be answered. It is one more of the many unanswerable enigmas of the supernatural. And Hilma, as well as her three friends, have ceased to question the whys and wherefores. They re-

member the last time they saw Consuelo on that journey through the jungle night and they *know* that what they saw really was there.

HISTORY REPEATS: TWINS EVERY 100 YEARS

Louise and Lillian G. were "war babies" who were born on July 1 during the forties in Atlanta, Georgia. Their parents, Henry and Pauline, met during World War II, and after a whirlwind courtship, were married on the weekend that Henry left for overseas.

Although there hadn't been time before the marriage, to get acquainted with her new inlaws with whom she had come to live, Pauline was delighted to acquire a father and a mother and a set of living grandparents.

She was glad, because her own family had died when she was quite young and she had really never enjoyed the feeling of "belonging" to folks who would treat her as one of their own.

However, Pauline was soon to learn that she had married into a family with a rather strange past, a family where history always repeated itself. And where she was destined to play a role.

Since there was not room for Pauline to stay in her inlaws' home in Atlanta, she went to live with her husband's grandparents, who resided twenty miles west of the city. Everyone decided that Pauline would be better off there to await the birth of her baby, or as it turned out, her twin girls.

Once at the country place, an impressive gentleman's farmhouse manor which dated to the early 1800s, Pauline found that she felt immediately at home. She had a feeling that she had been there before. When Grandma opened the kitchen door upon Pauline's arrival she took one look at her grandson's new wife and cried out with joy.

"Pa," the old woman shouted. "Come and see. It's Pauline. She's come home again!"

Pauline frowned in confusion and turned a questioning gaze upon the old servant with the snowy white hair who had driven in to Atlanta to pick her up. He smiled without saying a word, carried her luggage inside and disappeared up a staircase with it, leaving Pauline to guess at what the old woman had implied.

The young pregnant wife did not have long to wait before she began to find out.

Her husband's grandfather appeared in the kitchen and froze in his tracks momentarily. His genial blue eyes searched the newcomer and apparently liked what they saw. A moment later he embraced her and showed her into the parlor, a vast room lined with portraits of family members long since departed.

"So you're Pauline," he laughed, taking her by the hands and holding her at arms' length. "Here, now, let's look at you."

Grandma stood beside him, beaming at her. "Didn't I tell you, didn't I?" she said excitedly. "Isn't she the spittin' image of Mother Pauline when *she* was her age?"

Pauline suddenly felt little tingles course down her spine. It was not so much from what the old people were saying about her, but rather from her first glimpse of the portrait which hung above the mantle. She dropped her hands and, like one transfixed, moved across the creaky floor to stare up at the portrait.

It was like looking into a mirror at herself. The hair style was different and there were heavier contours to the face in the portrait, but the resemblance was remarkable.

Pauline turned in awe. "Was her name Pauline, also?"

Grandma nodded eagerly and in a rush of excitement, came beside her and pointed up at the portrait. "That was Pa's mother. And her name was Pauline, too. She had twin daughters, Louise and Lillian, who were born on July 1st and died when they were twenty-one. Then she had Pa. She gave birth to him when she was almost fifty years old."

"My, what a strange coincidence," Pauline remarked, not quite knowing what to say.

"It is," Grandma explained. "Our family is brim-full of strange coincidences like this. But none of that concerns you. Just make yourself at home, Pauline, and take care of yourself. Before long those twin girls of yours will be born and crawling all over the old house."

Pauline blinked at her new grandmother in amusement. "No one said I was going to have *twins*. Henry wants it to be a boy."

Grandma laughed and winked at the old man. "So Henry wants a boy?" She turned to Pauline, still smiling to herself, and showed her up to her room.

The conversation was soon forgotten, until eight weeks later when the physician stopped by to examine Pauline. He

put aside his stethoscope and grinned, saying, "There's no reason why your babies aren't going to be fine healthy children."

"*Babies?*" Pauline cried.

The doctor nodded. "No doubt about it. You're going to be the proud mother of twins."

On July 1st of that year Pauline did have her babies.

They were twins.

Girls.

And by unanimous consent, they were named Louise and Lillian.

Then, twenty-one years later to the day, Louise and Lillian were killed in a tragic automobile accident.

Although her husband's grandparents have since died, Pauline still wonders if the prediction will hold true, that she will give birth to a son at age fifty.

And although she never discusses the subject with Henry, her husband, Pauline wonders about all the rest, the strange coincidences of her name being the same as her husband's great-grandmother, and the fact that her twin daughters were also born on the 1st of July, exactly 100 years to the day after the birth of the other set of twins.

Will history continue to repeat itself in this family? Only time will tell. Until then, Henry and Pauline aren't talking—or guessing.

HER NIGHTMARE SAVED A MAN FROM DROWNING

JENNIE WHITE RETIRED to a small lake front cottage in a community comprised mainly of senior citizens, just outside of Tampa, Florida.

When Jennie first moved there from her native state of North Carolina, she made up her mind to not think of herself as having been "put out to pasture." She still liked to believe that she was a useful citizen with something to contribute to her community and to humanity.

For these reasons she made a decision. She would find something to do with herself and she would keep active. Since she had been a bookkeeper for forty-one years, she decided it was high time to do something else, something she had always wanted to do. And that was to make things out of seashells.

Shortly after she moved to her modest little cottage, Jen-

her life. She suddenly felt foolish and ashamed. She was unable to reply.

"Jennie? What on earth's wrong?"

Finally she realized she had to confess what had happened. She told her friend about the nightmare, how she'd unthinkingly picked up the phone, how it all had transpired.

A stony silence followed. After a few moments, Jennie heard her friend say, "When Sam comes back, we'd better not tell him or he'll be fit to be tied. Let's just say you looked out and saw what you thought was somebody thrashing around in the lake so you called us without thinking."

Jennie said in a hoarse voice, "All right. If you think that's best."

"I do. No point in us telling him that you *dreamed* you saw a man drowning."

"But the dream was as real—"

"I know, Jennie. I've had them many times. I know what they're like. Sooner or later I knew it would start upsetting you, living alone like you do."

Jennie hung up. She was too upset to know what to do and going back to bed would be out of the question. Since she was already dressed, and still holding the flashlight, she unlocked the front door and went outside.

It was a black night with only the faint glimmer of stars in the heavens. In the distance, down by the shore, she made out the lights of Sam's prowl car and another police car beside it, parked on the beach, the headlights directed into the waters of the lake.

When Jennie drew nearer her heart gave a tremendous leap.

She recognized Sam, even at that distance in the gloom. And she was able to pick out the figure of the town policeman, too. Both officers were carrying a man out of the lake.

She broke into a run. Then she stopped short, just beyond the ring of light on the beach where the officers were beginning to give artificial respiration to the man they'd rescued.

Jennie felt herself go to pieces. She sank down to her knees and sobbed uncontrollably. It had not been just a nightmare after all! She was still sobbing when Sam came over to her and eased her to her feet.

"Thanks to your alertness, Jennie," Sam told her excitedly, oblivious of his sopping wet clothes, "we got here in time to get that fellow out before he drowned."

The man whose life Jennie's dream had saved? It was the

young silent man she saw daily on the beach. He had had a whim to go for a dip, got caught unexpectedly in the tide, and had been fighting to escape the surging current when his rescuers appeared.

How Jennie had come to have a nightmare just at that hour, for the first time in her life, and how she had known it was an actual "vision" of someone drowning, is a mystery to her.

As a result of her experience, Jennie joined a group of other individuals who had occasionally manifested the strange ability to pierce the consciousness of others, and this has given her a new interest in life. Too, since she had "saved" the life of a drowning man, she now feels that she has something to live for and that her life was a little more than just worthwhile. Who knows, Jennie tells herself, but there may be others whose lives I may some day save.

FLAT TIRE ON A MOUNTAIN TOP

BARNEY AND HIS PARTNER, Milt, were truck drivers who owned their own rig and were contracted to haul trailer-loads of vegetables from Southern California to points north and west.

One of the routes they occasionally traveled took them over a hazardous mountain range in the Mt. Shasta area. Whenever the two men took a load over this route they remained particularly alert. It was risky business and they knew they couldn't exercise enough caution.

One such journey which they found themselves taking proved to be the most harrowing experience of their lives. And only a "miracle" had seemed to have saved them from what would have been a certain plunge to their death.

On the dangerous descent from the dizzy heights, the single slip of one's foot on the brake, a mechanical failure, or a blowout would spell disaster. Any truck driver who has ever driven a huge semi over a mountain range knows this. Therefore, the powerful tractor truck used for making such a haul must be in absolutely perfect mechanical condition.

Barney and Milt had only recently purchased new tires and had their brakes overhauled, so they were not too apprehensive when they started out on their run on that fateful morning of March 27, delivering a load of lettuce to a city in Oregon. To save time, they figured that the mountain route would be best.

By nightfall, if they had been able to make good time, they would have crossed the most dangerous roads and the rest of their trip would be a breeze.

However, they hadn't counted on the rain.

With traffic slowed to a crawl, they made little progress and were hours behind schedule by the time they began their ascent up the dangerous slopes of the Mt. Shasta range.

"I think we'd better pull off the road and wait for daylight," Milt told his partner. "These roads are hell at night. And in the rain, I don't know."

"Need I remind you that our contract has a penalty clause in it when we're late?" Barney said, hunched over the wheel, peering out into the pitch blackness of the mountain night.

"I know. But this road gives me the willies."

Barney laughed. In the twenty-four years he had been driving trucks for a living he had never had an accident. Moreover, his young partner had a habit of being overly nervous whenever there was a mountain range to cross. In fact, he was usually so nervous that he was unable to spell Barney at the wheel. This did not bother the older man. He had confidence in himself and in his ability to pull through any situation, no matter how perilous.

Barney attributed Milt's seemingly undue nervousness to his overwrought and hypersensitive wife. Ever since Milt and Betty had got married two years before, Milt had been showing her influence on him. Now that she was expecting their first child it was worse. He would prefer to pass up a job or to make a long and costly detour rather than cross a mountain range.

"Betty give you a hard time again before we left?" Barney asked him.

The young man frowned in the gloom but did not reply. He was thinking of the conversation Betty and he had had early that morning before they left.

Betty had made a particularly anxious appeal to him to be careful. "And call me the instant you cross those mountains," she had implored him as he kissed her at the door. "You know how terrified I am everytime you cross Mt. Shasta. If anything ever happened to you—"

"Take it easy, honey," he laughed, trying to sound as though there was nothing to it. "I'll be okay. Besides, Barney will be doing the driving and he knows those mountains like the back of his hand."

With misgivings she watched him leave, calling out, "I'll

be praying for you, Milt. Please, please don't take any chances."

He paused and looked back at her, smiling and taking her condition into consideration. She hated to be alone during these last weeks. He hurried into the truck and drove away.

"Well, this is it," Barney said later that night, his big fist on the gearshift and his foot gingerly poised over the brake. "We're approaching the worst of it."

Milt took a deep breath and tried to relax. He tried not to think of the dizzy heights nor the dangerous, narrow road upon which they were now creeping along.

"You sure the brakes are okay now? I didn't like the way they sounded when we hit those puddles this afternoon."

Barney darted a quick glance in his direction. "Will you knock it off, Milt? The way you're talking, you're making me nervous too." He laughed grimly.

And that was when they heard it—the sound of a tire blowing out.

Milt tensed in his seat. "Oh, no!" he cried.

Barney instinctively maneuvered the huge shuddering rig to the side of the road and shut off the engine, putting it in gear and setting the brakes.

"Which tire was it?" he cried without daring to look at Milt until the semi and trailer had stopped sliding and came to a standstill.

"I don't know. It sounded like the left front wheel."

They leapt out and with flashlights, examined the tires.

"I'll be damned," Barney cursed. "There isn't anything the matter. I could have sworn I heard a tire blow out."

Milt, shivering in the chill wind, felt a touch of vertigo gnaw at his insides as he realized they were ten thousand feet up and overlooking the winding mountain road far below, upon which could be seen the headlights of cars creeping along their cautious ways.

"I can guess what would've happened if there had been a blowout," Milt said. "Look."

Barney looked in the direction he was pointing. He slapped his partner's shoulder and said, "Okay. So we didn't have a blowout and we didn't go over the damn cliff. Feel better now?"

Just as Milt nodded and they were about to climb back into the cab, the left front tire suddenly popped with a nerve-shattering crack and began to hiss. In astonishment both men gaped at each other. It was the exact same sound

they had heard a few minutes before when they were driving.

Barney stooped down and looked at the tire. His mouth fell open in disbelief and he looked up at Milt standing beside him, shivering in the chill air. "Well what d'ya know about that?"

After the harrowing experience through which they had gone, Barney and Milt spent many hours trying to figure out how it had been possible for them to hear a tire blowing out *before* it actually blew.

But they were unable to come up with an answer.

Perhaps it was Milt's wife, Betty, who could have told them. However, neither man ever said a word about the experience to her.

"No point in getting her even more shook up than she is already, is there?" Milt grinned at his partner.

Barney smiled. He looked at Milt and shrugged. "No," he said. "I see no reason to tell her."

Whether it was due to Betty's intense concern for her husband's safety, or whether it was due to some supranatural force beyond human understanding that gave Barney and Milt their forewarning cannot be answered.

THE UNDERTAKER WHO COULDN'T SLEEP

William K. had been a funeral director all of his adult life. He had carried on the traditions in the funeral home his father had established before him. And one of those traditions was in following the rule, "Never put off until tomorrow what must be done today."

When William was to disobey this rule for the first time in his professional life, he was also destined to save the life of a helpless man.

For many years William had learned from his father that the only way to properly run a funeral establishment was to run it conscientiously and on schedule. "A funeral director who is unable to adhere to a working plan is a man who is unable to operate a successful business," his father had told him many times.

During the years, William learned the wisdom of those words. Bereaved families were suffering enough and they shouldn't be made to go through the prolonged anguish that can come from senseless delays. He had learned the

vital importance of beginning work immediately in the preparation of the newly departed.

Late one evening in September, after a particularly hectic day during which he had handled two large funerals, the body of a young man was brought into William's establishment. Because the body was scheduled for viewing the next morning at ten, work was to begin at once on the preparation, the embalming, and so forth.

Since his regular embalmer was off for the night, it was William's duty to do the preparation himself.

For more than nineteen years he had always tended to his duties promptly and could never seem to rest until he had everything in order for the next day. However, on the night the young man's body was brought in, William just could not force himself to begin work.

He retired, instead, to his office where he stretched out upon the sofa and closed his eyes. He decided that he would get up early the next morning and do what had to be done then.

Although this had been contrary to his many years of habit, William did not feel unduly upset. He closed his eyes and tried to sleep, but as weary as he had been before, something now prevented sleep from shrouding his consciousness.

The clock on his desk said two A.M. He looked at it in annoyance. It reminded him that he had work to do in the preparation room and he shouldn't be trying to sleep until that task had been done.

Still, he could not force himself to get up and go to work. Something was making him uneasy and he had no way of knowing what it was.

After a long while he managed to relax and doze off. He had only been asleep for several minutes when he heard the sound of someone crying.

William, who had been inured to the sound of weeping, found himself unable to stand it now. It seemed to be all around him, creeping into his very consciousness.

He sat up and rubbed his eyes. It was two-twenty. He lighted a cigarette and tried to smoke it, but the tobacco tasted bitter. He crushed it out, told himself he'd better get going and finish what had to be done, but still he was unable to make himself leave his office.

He settled back against the sofa and stared at the clock. As the second hand swept around and around, he again grew conscious of the sound of the sobbing that had wak-

ened him. His flesh began to tingle and he stood up, cautiously, his ears straining to determine the direction of the sound.

Then he went out into the chapel. No one was about. And yet, the sound of the crying seemed more pronounced there.

With trepidation, not daring to guess what he would find, he gingerly went into the preparation room where the young man's body reposed on a slab, covered with a sheet.

William stood rooted to the spot. The sound of the weeping was coming directly from the deceased!

With trembling hands he turned back the sheet and stared down at the still features of the dead man. At that instant the sound of the weeping ceased.

The silence seemed to close in around him. He found himself bending over the still form, placing his ear against the man's chest.

Then every muscle in his body tensed.

He had detected a faint heartbeat! The man on the slab was *not* dead.

Not pausing to waste another second, William rushed to the phone and put in an emergency call to the hospital. Minutes later, with an assistant he had roused out of bed, William was speeding the body to the hospital. When he pulled up, the doctors were waiting.

Twenty minutes later the man's eyes were opened and he was staring gratefully at William.

"If you would have begun embalming this man," a doctor told him, "you would have killed him certainly. Although he had been pronounced dead by a competent physician who had examined him thoroughly, sometimes these rare cataleptic strokes are frequently impossible to detect. The chances of a thing like this happening again are one in ten million."

And who knows what the odds really are of something like this happening again? The explanation of this strange phenomena must remain a mystery. First, because William had been unable to make himself begin the embalming; and second, because he had heard the man on the slab "sobbing" through soundproof walls!

THE CLOTHES THAT WOULDN'T STAY SEWN

For months, Melanie S. had been planning to attend a sorority convention in New York City, 150 miles from her home in Pennsylvania.

Her old friend, Virginia R. agreed to make several new gowns for Melanie and after weeks of work, the gowns and a suit were ready. Melanie was extremely pleased with her friend's handiwork and offered to pay her, but Virginia bluntly refused to accept it.

As she tried on the garments, Melanie expressed her delight and marvelled at the craftsmanship. "I just can't accept this without giving you *something* for all your time and trouble," she said.

"That's what friends are for," Virginia said. "You don't owe me anything and I wouldn't think of accepting payment from you."

"Then I'll bring you back something special from New York. I insist."

"It really isn't necessary," she said, flushing with pleasure. "Just wear them in good health and have a wonderful time."

Five days after that conversation took place, Melanie was in her hotel room preparing to dress for the gala affair. She happily took down one of the dresses Virginia had made for her and was just about to put it on when the garment seemed to fall apart in her hands.

She looked at it in utter astonishment. The painstakingly handsewn seams were hanging apart just as though they hadn't been sewn at all. She couldn't believe her eyes; this could not be true. Had someone come into her room while she was out and deliberately, maliciously removed the stitching? Certainly not, she told herself. Such a thing was preposterous.

But what should she do now? She had planned to wear the dress at the affair that night, but that was out of the question.

She went to the closet and removed the other garments she'd brought with her. Oddly enough, the suit and the other gown Virginia had made were also in pieces.

Stunned, Melanie sat down. She turned on the lights as brightly as possible and peered at the garments. Not a

trace of the stitchings, which she had seen with her *own* eyes, was in evidence. In fact, the seams and edges appeared to be completely untouched by needle or thread.

Was this some sort of a nasty trick Virginia had played on her? Melanie wondered. No, that was out of the question. Surely, what had happened to her new clothes couldn't have just happened without a reason. There had to be some explanation.

Now that her plans were ruined because she did not have anything to wear to the affair, Melanie decided there was only one thing to do: phone Virginia, tell her what had happened and ask what had gone wrong. Perhaps she might be able to offer some explanation.

The two women had been close friends for years. Each could never do enough for the other. Surely, Virginia would never in a million years do anything like this deliberately.

She reached for the telephone.

It was nearly nine o'clock. By now, she supposed, Virginia would be watching her favorite TV program and getting ready for bed.

After the telephone operator had tried the number for an impossibly long time, and there had been no answer, Melanie felt strangely ill at ease.

She got the feeling that Virginia was in some sort of trouble. Once before she had such a feeling and, as it had turned out, Virginia had been taken to the hospital unknown to her. Her strange feeling *then*, as now, chilled her.

She tried the number once again.

No reply.

Melanie stared at the remnants of the clothes Virginia had made and suddenly she felt that there was some purpose to all this madness.

She asked the operator for her own home number and as she waited for the connection, felt herself growing extremely agitated and uncomfortable.

Her husband was surprised to hear her voice. "I didn't expect you to call until tomorrow, honey," he said.

"I know," she said, her words coming in a burst, "but don't say anything and just listen. I've a queer feeling that something's happened to Virginia. Run across the street to her house, darling and look in on her."

Melanie's husband blinked at the phone. "And you want me to leave the receiver off the hook while I do that?"

"Yes, yes, only please hurry!"

The urgency and anxiety in her tone frightened him

Without further ado, he put the phone down and hurried out. Virginia's house across the street, was still lighted. However, there was no answer to his insistent knocking.

Melanie's husband scratched his chin, wondering why Virginia had gone out and left the lights on. Since this was not at all like her, he decided to try to get into the house to see if she was all right.

Thirty minutes later Melanie sat on the edge of the bed in her hotel room, stunned at what her husband was saying. "So I went in and went upstairs. I heard the moans coming from the bathroom. She had fallen and was paralyzed. Thank God you phoned when you did. She might have died by morning if she'd lain there like that all night. Whatever possessed you to call, Melanie?"

Melanie took a deep breath and sighed, "God only knows," she said.

But when she hung up the phone a few minutes later and prepared to put away the garments which had fallen apart, Melanie cried out in amazement. The clothing was intact, just as it had been the day she had tried them on, and just as they had been when she hung them up in her hotel room.

Did Melanie *imagine* what she had seen? Or was this some strange manifestation of the supernatural that cannot be explained? Surely, Melanie had summed it up when she sighed and told her husband, "God only knows."

THE CRYING SPECTRE

GUAYAQUIL, ECUADOR is a place few people visit without hearing about the mystery of the crying spectre. On the outskirts of this coastal city, in the sparsely settled wilds not far from Yaguachi and the unknown jungles of that area, there is a settlement which was abandoned many years ago. The reason the inhabitants moved away is not at all surprising.

It seems that ever since a murder of passion had taken place on the banks of a stream, the screams of the principals in the macabre drama could be heard echoing through the jungle night, long after the event.

According to residents of the area, a young married couple, Amazonian Indians named Cira and Justo, moved into the settlement in 1938, making their home in a modest two-room house in the center of the village.

Cira and Justo soon found themselves the most popular couple in the area, to a large extent because they were such graceful dancers. But all life cannot be music and laughter and dancing, and tragedy was soon to strike the two young people.

On a particularly bad night during the rainy season Cira missed her husband.

She looked everywhere for him, but he was nowhere to be found. Upon her return to their house, she found him on his pallet, pretending to be asleep, as if he had been there during the greater part of the time she had been out searching for him.

Cira had begun to have reason to mistrust her husband. She had heard it rumored that Justo was seeing another woman on the sly. Now she found that his clothes were still wet from having been out in the rain.

Insanely jealous, Cira accused Justo of infidelity. He laughed and denied it, of course. But several days later, when Cira was supposed to be going down to the river with the other natives to do their laundry, she hid in the bushes and kept a watch upon her husband.

After waiting fifteen minutes or so, Justo crept out of the house and vanished in the jungle, heading toward a grove which was familiar to all the young lovers in the neighborhood.

With her heart racing, Cira followed. She did not have far to go before she saw her husband stop in a clearing and whistle. She watched in fury as a young girl emerged from the thicket and laughingly began to run toward Justo.

This was too much for Cira. She screamed in anger and charged out of the brush, a wicked knife in her hand.

Justo stopped in his tracks and gaped in disbelief as he watched his wife rush toward him, the knife upraised.

Moments later, Justo sank to the ground, his jugular vein severed. He was dead in less than a minute.

As the impact of what she'd done dawned upon her, Cira turned the knife upon herself. However, she missed her mark and was in horrible agony before she died. During her final moments on earth, the girl who had met Justo gingerly crept toward her. She had been an eyewitness to a murder and suicide and the shock of what she had seen had been more than she could take.

"You know what you've done?" she cried at the dying Cira. "You've killed him and yourself for no good reason. He met me here in this grove because my mother and I have

been making a present for you, a new costume. Do you want to see it?"

Cira crawled upon the bloodsoaked earth. Her head half-raised, anguish in her eyes, she looked on as the girl ran into the wood and returned a moment later with a gaily colored costume. At the sight of it, and with the realization of what she had done, Cira began to shriek at the top of her voice. She did not cease until her heart stopped beating.

But then, after the bodies had been removed, at sundown that evening and every night since, the shrieking lamentations of the dead woman continued to tear through the silence of the jungle, echoing again and again the testimony of her foolhardy murder and suicide.

Within a week the natives all moved away from the area. The nightly screams of the crying spectre were too much for them.

The unearthly screams were eventually recorded by investigators of psychic phenomena, and upon analysis and careful study there appeared to be neither logical reason why they were still heard, nor their source of origin.

No one hears the screams any more, for the simple reason that no one is brave enough to live in the village.

THE SILENT GHOST IN THE JAMAICAN MONASTERY

Father Paul listened to the confessions of the mute man in the only way he could, by reading what the man wrote down on scraps of paper. After the confessions were made, the priest would burn the bits of paper, thus keeping the confession secret, as all Roman Catholics trust their priests to do.

The mute man was no exception. He believed with the deepest of conviction in Father Paul.

It is believed by devout Catholics that their souls cannot rest if they should remain unconfessed. Therefore, with remarkable regularity, the mute man came to Father Paul, wrote his confession notes, and then received the priest's instructions, after which the priest burned them.

One day Father Paul missed the mute man who had come to see him so faithfully down through the years. As time went by, the good father made inquiries and was dismayed to learn that the man had died.

Then, a remarkable thing happened at the monastery

where Father Paul lived. One of the priests, upon returning to his study after supper one evening, came face to face with an apparition. The figure was that of a man. He seemed to materialize out of the thin air and he gestured strangely at the priest who remained frozen to the spot where he was standing, looking on in utter astonishment.

The priest then ran to tell the others in the monastery what he had seen but when they returned to the place where the visitation had occurred, nothing was there.

During the next few months, the apparition was seen again and again by the brothers, who did not know what to make of it.

Finally, Father Paul was in the corridor with another priest one day when they rounded a turn and came upon the unearthly visitor.

"There!" cried the priest with Father Paul. "Now do you believe me? We all can't be imagining this."

Father Paul stared at the spectre. He peered intently at the glowing, somewhat transparent form, sensing something familiar about it, something that made him feel he *knew* the apparition.

Suddenly he recognized it. The ethereal shape at which they were staring was the spirit of the deaf mute, the man who had confessed his sins on bits of paper.

The holy father spoke gently. "What is it you want?"

The spectre seemed highly excited that at long last he had come upon Father Paul. He made a sign as if to ask if he was recognized. Father Paul crossed himself and nodded.

With that, the apparition beckoned to him, pointing in a direction that led down the corridor. Father Paul and his companion exchanged puzzled glances and trudged after the apparition, which was then floating in midair, directing them to a long corridor that turned off to the right.

At last the spectre stopped. He pointed to a niche in the stone wall and gestured excitedly.

Father Paul muttered a prayer and said aloud, "Yes, yes, I understand you. Go now and may God be with you."

With those words the image vanished.

Father Paul went up to the niche, which was where he kept his prayer book, reached inside and withdrew his missal. Without opening it he clutched it to his breast and walked toward the cloister where several of the brothers were standing around a fire, burning leaves.

The priest beside Father Paul looked on as he paused and signalled for the others to draw back from the fire. Then

Father Paul went up to the fire and carefully placed the missal in the flames.

As the smoke curled upwards into the Jamaican night, the brothers glimpsed what was their last view of the silent spectre that had visited them so often during the past months. For a brief moment the spectre seemed to hover in the smoke, and then he was gone.

They knew what had happened.

Father Paul had once accidentally slipped into his missal one of the notes which the mute had given him during confession. As long as that note remained for other eyes to read the danger existed that some mortal man might know his sins. There was only one way to rectify the error, of course, and that was to burn the missal containing the note.

A SCORPION IN THE AUTHOR'S BED

THE TIME WAS 2:30 A.M. on the morning of Tuesday, May 18, 1965. The place, this writer's office in Miami.

As was customary whenever a book was in progress, it was expedient to remain with it around the clock, taking cat-naps whenever necessary on a folding cot which was kept in a room next to my office.

Jack Foley Horkheimer, one of my closest friends, was on the phone, discussing a play he had written which was currently being produced by several little theatre groups around the country. It had been Jack's habit to phone at this late hour because he knew I was always glad to hear from him during those lonely hours since it provided something of a mental respite.

"How much longer are you going to work, Bob?" Jack asked after a lull in the phone conversation.

"Another hour perhaps. I'm finishing a difficult chapter and it should take at least that long before I wind it up. I'll turn in then for a couple of hours. Should have the whole thing completed tomorrow," I said, stifling a yawn.

The yawn was infectious. He laughed. "You should get more sleep. That goes for me, too. Seriously, Bob. That office isn't any place for you to rest. You should go home more."

"I intend to do that just as soon as I mail this manuscript off," I promised him.

"Well, I'll let you get back to work," Jack said. "Goodnight."

When I returned to my work again I found myself able to plunge into it with renewed gusto. The break I'd taken during the time I'd talked with Jack was refreshing.

At exactly 3:30 I had typed the last page of the chapter, stood up, and stretched wearily. Although I would have liked to have driven to my home on Miami Beach, it was imperative that I get back to the book without wasting any time because it was going at a white heat then and I didn't want to lose momentum. The half-hour drive home and the half-hour drive back would have meant a lost hour. At this time I did not welcome the drive for more reasons than one. I was utterly exhausted and it was about all I could do to drop across the cot and catch forty winks.

Just as I was about to go into the other room after turning off the desk lamp, the phone rang. Startled, because it jangled like an alarm bell, I grabbed for it as if to strangle the sound.

It was Jack.

His voice sounded peculiar and I was totally unnerved when he asked, "Bob? Are you okay?"

A strange feeling came over me and I felt the breath catch in my throat. "Sure I'm okay, Jack. Why? What's up?"

He laughed nervously, a forced laugh that was supposed to put me at ease. "I know you're probably thinking I'm out of my mind, but what were you doing at that moment when I called?"

"Just turned off the lights and was on my way in to hit the sack. Why?"

"You're not kidding?" he asked incredulously.

I assured him I was not.

"This gives me the creeps," he cried. "That's exactly what I imagined you were doing. But you didn't go into the other room yet, did you?"

"No."

There was a loud exhalation of relief. "Bob, I know this is fantastic, but be careful, will you?"

"Now you're giving *me* the creeps," I said, looking around anxiously. The stillness in the office was suddenly morbid and depressing. "What are you getting at?"

"Call it ESP or whatever you like," Jack blurted. "But I have the uneasiest feeling that something's in your bed that could kill you."

"Now I know who hasn't been getting enough sleep

lately," I told him. "But thanks for the warning anyhow. I'll take your advice."

After I hung up, a disquieting feeling of dread came over me and I found myself shrinking back as I prepared to enter the room that held the cot. I laughed at my qualms and tried to dismiss them, but the feeling of apprehension was still strong within me.

Without wasting any more time I flipped on the lights and went to the cot. Nothing was there. I laughed and for the devil of it, picked up my pillow.

And that's when I saw it.

A scorpion!

It was a monster, at least nine inches from claw to tail and the sight of it made my flesh crawl. Seizing a broom, I knocked it to the floor and hammered it to death.

Then I swept it into the outer office and sank down in my chair. My heart was pounding as I thought of the close call I'd just had and mechanically I picked up the phone and dialed Jack's number.

When I had told him that I *had* found a scorpion in my bed he exclaimed, "My God! I saw it, so help me, I actually saw it waiting to sting you!"

Call it extrasensory perception or whatever you will, but the fact is that this actually happened. How it was possible for Jack to envision this is certainly *beyond* human understanding.

If it had not been for Jack's phone call that night, I wonder if this book would ever have been written, or if I would be here to tell of it. Moreover, my own feelings at the time were completely puzzling to me because somehow I *knew* that Jack's warning was not to be taken lightly. I *knew* without knowing *why* that there was a good reason for my disquietude and shrinking feelings. *How* did I know? Perhaps someday I'll find out.

THE PHANTOM AD IN THE NEWSPAPER

Howard Miller's hobby for years had been a source of dismay to his wife, Kathy. The small apartment in which they lived in the suburbs of a teeming city on the eastern seaboard just would not hold the many rows of bookcases which Howard had been using to store the musty old bibles he collected.

"It doesn't make any sense to me whatsoever," Kathy complained. "Why would anyone want to collect old bibles, of all things?"

No matter how many times he tried to explain to his wife the reasons why he kept up his unusual hobby, he never managed to make her see things his way.

Finally their relationship reached the breaking-point. In no uncertain terms, Kathy demanded, "Either those smelly old bibles go, or *else!*"

Howard, defeated, decided it was more important to keep the peace in his home than his valuable collection of bibles. So he promptly sat down at his desk and carefully composed an advertisement which offered his collection for sale, either piecemeal or as an entirety.

He showed the ad to Kathy and she gave him a smile of approval.

The next morning, a Friday in May, Howard went downtown and entered the newspaper office. The woman who accepted his ad and gave him the bill assured him that it would appear in the next Sunday edition.

"Well?" Kathy demanded as he came home that evening. "Did you run the ad?"

"Yes, my dear," he said. "It will be in Sunday's paper."

"Good!" she said, leaving him alone with his bibles.

Sunday morning at nine o'clock Howard was in the basement repairing one of his wife's lamps, when Kathy appeared at the top of the stairs to call him. Someone had come to see his bibles. When he went up she drew him aside and whispered, "The man who's here about the ad *proves* that all you bible collecters are oddballs. Just wait until you see him. He looks like he's dressed up for a masquerade party or something, with that three-cornered hat, knee pants and buckles on his shoes."

Howard went to see for himself. For once, Kathy hadn't exaggerated. If anything, she had understated the man's strange appearance. Not only did he have silver buckles on his shoes, but he was wearing a lace shirt with ruffles and also sported a meticulous Prince Albert beard.

"I've come to inquire about the bibles you advertised," the man said in a surprisingly precise English accent. "May I have your permission to look them over?"

Howard was aware of Kathy hovering in the background. He smiled and waved his hand, saying, "Of course, help yourself."

As the strangely dressed man quickly passed each row of

neatly stacked bibles, Howard got the impression that he knew exactly what he was looking for. Kathy obviously had the same feeling because she raised her eyebrows and exchanged glances with him.

"Ah!" the man cried, extracting a huge bible from one of the shelves. "I do believe this is exactly what I've been seeking. May I examine it a moment?"

Flabbergasted because the stranger had selected his most prized possession, a rare bible that had been printed in London in 1795, Howard was about to voice a protest but the words from Kathy, "Why, of course you may," silenced him.

After the stranger had turned several pages he closed the book and announced, "I'll take it. How much are you asking?"

Howard stammered, "It's worth many hundreds of dollars. But I'll let you have it for, er, *a hundred dollars*?"

"Agreed!" the man said, immediately reaching into his coat pocket and withdrawing a small pouch.

While Kathy and Howard gaped at each other the man approached the desk, turned his back to them and seemed to be counting out the money.

After a few moments he turned, saluted them with his hat, tucked the bible under his arm, and said, "A hundred dollars is not a lot of money to pay for a volume such as this. It has great sentimental value for me. You'll find the money where I've left it for you on the desk. Good day, and good health to you both."

Before they could think to show him to the door, the man opened it and went out. Kathy went to the desk, took one look at it and cried out, "We've been swindled! He didn't leave us a hundred dollars. He only left some worthless old coins!"

Howard, in a panic, rushed to the door and flung it open. A second later Kathy was beside him. They went outside and looked up and down the street. No one was in sight. The street was deserted.

"Where did he go?" Kathy asked.

Howard shrugged. He went inside and walked over to the desk. Then he whistled. "Worthless old coins, you said. Just take a look at them, will you?"

Before them on the desk was a stack of five-dollar gold pieces. Twenty to be exact. And Howard was in for another surprise when he took them to his bank the next day. The coins, commonly referred to as half eagles, were in uncircu-

lated condition, minted in 1795 and brought a price of fifteen hundred dollars each!

But what was even more strange was the fact that no one else came to inquire about his bible collection that day. Later, when Kathy remarked about how curious this was, she opened the newspaper to search for the ad, but it was nowhere to be found. Moreover, they learned from the newspaper office the next day that through an oversight the ad had not been run at all!

Only the twenty half eagles with which the oddly dressed stranger had paid for the 1795 bible remained as evidence of his coming and going.

Today, Howard Miller and his wife live in a spacious home that has ample room for his collection of old bibles. In fact, now Kathy has become a devotee of the hobby too.

THE PREMATURE OBITUARY

DURING A RAINSTORM late one August afternoon in 1961, a tall young man in his early thirties darted out between two parked cars along a busy thoroughfare and was struck by a bus. When he was brought to the city hospital, he was rushed immediately to surgery.

A hasty, preliminary examination revealed that he was not expected to live. Because there was no identification on his person and because the unfortunate man was unconscious, the hospital authorities had no way of knowing who he was or how to get in touch with his relatives or friends.

The man was fingerprinted and the laundry marks on his clothing were noted and turned over to the police department, as is the customary procedure when identification is lacking.

The doctor in attendance shook his head sadly at an intern and a nurse who were assisting him. "Too bad, isn't it," he said, "that a man has to die alone like this? I'm sure he has loved ones, perhaps even a wife and children who should be here now."

"How long does he have?" the nurse asked.

The physician shrugged. "Twelve to twenty hours, at the most."

That was at midnight.

At eight o'clock the following morning the police had not

been able to identify the man from his prints, which had been sent on to the FBI in Washington. The laundry marks were still being checked and that would take time. Days, perhaps even weeks.

Exactly at eight-thirty that morning an older man, a young woman and a small boy appeared at the information desk. "We came to make arrangements for Tommy Bowers' funeral," the man said. "Can we see the body, please? Can you tell us how he died?"

The nurse at the station overheard the tearful inquiry. She came over and took them aside while she asked the information clerk to notify the house doctor whose duty it was to speak with the next of kin in matters such as this.

The physician arrived, listened to their story and shook his head in the negative. "Are you certain you have the right hospital? No one by that name has died here."

The young woman broke down and the man tried to comfort her. "This is my daughter-in-law. We read in the obituary that my son was killed in an accident yesterday. This is no time for jokes, doctor."

"But I tell you we have no one by that name here," the doctor said, producing the register of hospital patients. "Look for yourself."

"The newspaper gave his name. He must be here. He's thirty-two years old. Tall and fair-haired."

The description rang a bell in the doctor's mind. "Wait a minute," he said a little dubiously, "there is the chance that an accident victim who was brought in yesterday may be your son. But no, that's impossible. Although we've been unable to identify him, there's been nothing in the newspapers. The police are still trying to—"

"It must be my son!" the man cried, seizing the doctor by the arm. "He isn't dead?"

"I don't know," the doctor answered, "but let's find out."

A few minutes later they entered the recovery room outside the surgery. The young boy was told to wait in the lobby.

The moment the man and the young woman stepped around the screen, they cried out. Their ordeal was over. They had found Tommy Bowers, and he was still alive.

As they reached the side of his bed, the accident victim opened his eyes for the first—and last time. He smiled at his father and wife, muttered something that sounded as if he was glad to have seen them, then he died.

Later, still unable to understand how Tommy Bowers' father and wife had learned he was in the hospital, the chief of staff questioned them at length.

"You say you read about his death in the obituaries? If that was the case, *which* paper did you see it in?"

The man was unable to answer.

"Where did you get this paper?"

"I got it from a newsboy this morning on my way down to the bus stop. While I was waiting for the seven o'clock bus, I started to read the paper. Then I saw his name. Tommy's name. It said Thomas Bowers died last night in the city hospital as a result of a traffic accident."

The hospital staff checked with all the local newspapers. No such ad had appeared.

Tommy's wife had not seen the ad, and her father-in-law had lost the paper in his frantic haste to get to the hospital.

If the man had simply misread the obituary columns, or if his mind had played a trick on him because he had heard from his daughter-in-law that his son had not returned home the night before and had sensed something was amiss, there is no way of knowing. But the fact remains that a phantom ad apparently *did* appear which was read by Tommy's father. And that was all that counted.

THE BILLBOARD THAT WASN'T THERE

JEANNE SPENCER and her two classmates, Roslyn and Flo, were late for school that Monday morning in March, 1963 because of a billboard that wasn't there.

The girls had been home for the weekend and were driving north in Jeanne's car, crossing Pennsylvania, when Roslyn suggested that they stop at a restaurant for chicken dinners.

"Where did you see a sign advertising a restaurant on *this* road?" Jeanne said. "I didn't see any sign."

"It was right back there," Roslyn insisted. "Didn't you see it, Flo?"

The girl in the front seat beside Jeanne nodded and said, "Ros is right. A sign back there said we should turn right in two miles."

"You are both kooky," Jeanne laughed. "I'm driving and I didn't see any signs. Besides, there aren't any restaurants in these hills—and on this terrible road."

"We both saw it, so will you *please* turn off when we get to the road."

"Okay, okay. You said it was two miles."

"Yes, but that was about a mile back."

Jeanne glanced at her speedometer. She began to slow down. The car rounded a sharp curve and began a steep descent. When they reached the bottom of the hill they could see a paved road leading to the right into the hills.

"Is this it; you sure?" she asked her companions.

They were sure. "Sue us if we're wrong," Flo finished.

They laughed and as Jeanne made a right, leaned forward to watch for the restaurant. After they had driven along the road for fifteen minutes, Jeanne abruptly turned off the road, pulled up the handbrake and glared. "I know perfectly well *I* did not see a sign. By now you should realize there isn't any restaurant up this road. For all we know this road probably leads nowhere."

"Well, don't get mad," Roslyn answered. "You're hungry too, aren't you? Let's go on for a few more miles. Maybe it's a little further on."

After another ten more miles without seeing a restaurant, they drew abreast of a man driving a tractor. They hailed him and asked if there was a restaurant on that road.

"No," was the reply. "Ain't nothing up this road but some farms and a lumber mill."

Jeanne was silent as she made a U-turn and headed back toward the highway. Roslyn and Flo settled into the corners of their seats, trying to make themselves as small as possible. They did the wisest thing they could do under the circumstances: remain silent.

When she reached the main highway, Jeanne stopped for the stop sign and without looking at either of them, said, "We lost over a half-hour on that hot fried chicken chase, so will the next hamburger joint suit your royal highnesses?"

No answer.

She turned onto the highway and began to drive toward the hills beyond, over which lay the road that would carry them back to their little college town.

When they rounded the first turn, the flashing of lights from parked highway patrol cars greeted them. Jeanne slowed to a stop, flagged down by a uniformed officer.

"What's wrong, officer? An accident?"

The man nodded grimly. "No, a landslide. Say, where have you girls been? Didn't you see the roadblock several miles back?"

They hadn't. Jeanne said, "We turned off to look for a restaurant. My friends kept saying that they saw a billboard a couple of miles back advertising a fried chicken place."

The patrolman looked at them and slowly shook his head. "You'll have to go back twelve miles and detour." Then he broke into laughter.

"What's so funny?" Jeanne asked, more than a little perturbed.

"A billboard, they saw? I think your friends need glasses. There aren't any signs in either direction for forty miles on this state road."

"That's a fine time to find *that* out," she snapped. "And we were driving up and down that road to nowhere for the past half hour for nothing."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," the officer said, the smile vanishing suddenly from his face. "You say you were driving around for the past half hour looking for this restaurant, up *that* road?" he pointed back toward the direction they had just come.

Jeanne nodded.

"Your detour, girls, in all probability saved your lives. If you had been on that road anytime within the last half hour, we'd be digging you out right now."

As they drove back the way they had come, Jeanne nudged the car forward slowly while Roslyn and Flo hung out of the windows watching for the sign they both swore they had seen.

It was never found. It was simply not there.

"But I tell you it was!" Roslyn insisted. "I saw it with my own eyes; didn't you, Flo?"

The girl turned around and looked at Roslyn, confusion on her face. "Know something, Ros?" she said. "I'm not sure and frankly, as hungry as I am right now, I wouldn't swear to anything."

They reached the detour and turned off, slowing to ask the highway patrolman who was standing in the center of the road directing the traffic, "Sir, could you tell us where we might find a nice restaurant around here?"

The man shrugged. "Stay on this road for about twenty miles until you come to a sign."

"A *sign!* ?" the three girls chorused. "Oh, no!"

The patrolman looked at them as if they were crazy. "When you come to the stop sign, turn right."

"Oh, you meant a stop sign, *not* a billboard?"

"That's right, Miss. Billboards're prohibited on these roads, or didn't you know?"

Jeanne laughed and put the car into gear. "We know now," she said. "Don't we, girls?"

DISPATCH FROM THE GRAVE

THE PLACE WAS behind the enemy lines in north Burma. The time was the night of May 10, 1944. A handful of American infantrymen, British Lancashiremen, Ghurkas, Kachins and Burmese jungle fighters had been ordered to set up a diversionary action against the firmly entrenched Japanese. The object, to rout the organized enemy and make it possible for the capture of key positions along the route of the "Burma Road."

The problem?

Communications.

Captain Neil B. Murray, together with a Burmese noncom and four combat-fatigued, dengue-fever-ridden riflemen, found themselves face to face with the most serious of all problems; the lack of communications. They had been cut off from their fellow guerillas and were surrounded by the Japanese. And what was worse, they had been ordered to rendezvous with Col. John Holbert and his unit in order to mobilize for a major push against the enemy in an adjacent sector. But first, they had been ordered to sit tight. Where they were supposed to go, and at what time they were supposed to be there, was anybody's guess. Captain Murray waited patiently for the message that was supposed to be sent over the field radio.

But no message was received.

The five men in his unit began to grow uneasy. From their hiding place in the jungle underbrush they could virtually spit upon the enemy as droves of them passed their position in a seemingly never-ending parade. The longer they remained inactive and in that position, the more dangerous it was to stay where they were.

By noon of the second day the captain was debating with himself, trying to make up his mind whether or not to break radio silence and attempt contact with Holbert. He finally decided. He looked at his radio operator and made the signal to wind her up.

The man hesitated, glanced around to see if any of the

enemy were within earshot, and then nervously began to crank the generator.

Before the captain could phrase the words of his message in his mind, the voice of the Colonel's radioman was heard. "Command to Murray, do you read me? Sorry to have kept you waiting so long, but we've been running for two days trying to get out of the hornet's nest. Let's make a date for 2200 at rendezvous checkpoint Log Cabin. See you then, old man."

It was then a little past noon on the 11th. The map reference to which the colonel had ordered the captain and his men was nearly eight miles from their present position. With the thick jungle and the swarms of the enemy surrounding them, the able captain knew their chances of ever making it would be slim.

But orders were orders. He gave the signal and the men, eager to be active again, pushed off.

It was 2145 when they finally reached the rendezvous.

And for the first time in several days the men were able to relax their vigil, for they had finally made it back to their own lines as was evidenced by the heavy concentration of infantrymen dug in throughout the area.

At 2150, all hell broke loose. The Japanese had formed a dragnet beginning within fifteen hundred yards of the Americans' position and started combing back through the jungle toward their own heavily concentrated forces.

Murray and his men peered into the inky jungle and watched as flares and tracer bullets literally raked the bush.

The Burmese non-com turned to the captain and grinned. "Looks like we got here in nicks of time, no?"

"And how, yes!" Murray replied, mopping the sweat from his face. "Another few hours in there and we'd have been cut down like ducks in a shooting gallery."

Shortly after 2200 the firing ceased. Then an unearthly silence walled them in. Except for an occasional rifle shot, the rest of the night was peaceful and the small group were able to sleep.

At dawn it was immediately apparent that the radio dispatch had saved their lives. The Japanese all around them had vanished, withdrawing during the night. But before they retreated, they had made doubly certain that no guerillas had infiltrated their lines.

The area commander sent runners along their fortifications

to request the officers to report their positions and remaining strengths.

"Hey, you guys," a burly rifleman called out to the group with Captain Murray. "What outfit you from?"

"I'm Captain Murray," he said, moving down to greet the man. "I was ordered to rendezvous here with Col. Holbert."

"Yeah?" the soldier said. "When was that supposed to be? The colonel's unit got it three days ago. Not a man was left."

The captain blinked at the news, turning to face his men as they came down from their positions and gathered around.

"Are you *sure* the colonel is dead?" Murray asked in a tone that clearly said he didn't believe it.

The soldier spat a dead cigar butt out of his mouth. "Hell, yes, I'm sure. I buried him and his radio operator myself, three days ago."

The Burmese non-com was speechless. He turned away from the others and went to stand by himself, staring off into the mysterious jungle beyond. "If the colonel and his radioman were killed three days ago, then *who* sent that message?" a rifleman asked.

Looking at the captain and his ragged men as though he was weary of all the questions, the soldier replied, "What's the difference? You're all alive and kicking, aren't you?"

But that did not answer the question. Who sent the dispatch from the grave that had resulted in the saving of their lives?

FLOWERS SENT FROM BEYOND

ALL THE WORLD loves a lover and Ralph Arons was no exception. He was more than just an ordinary lover, though. He was engaged to the beautiful Helen Rowell, one of the runners-up in the finals for the Miss Universe contest from his home state and he had already established himself as a 26-year-old boy-wonder, business-genius in the world of consumer financing.

In his job as field director for a large finance concern, Ralph had acquired an amazing record of success. He was slated to go places and make big money while doing so. Hence, he was able to promise his fiance, Helen, not only the moon and the stars, but their very own half-acre three-

bedroom, two-bath home in an exclusive section of their hometown.

"Helen," he said to her at their engagement party, "I love you more than life itself. I want you to know it and I want the whole world to know it, too. There isn't anything I wouldn't do for you—even if it meant coming back from the dead!"

Little did Helen and their friends realize then how uncannily prophetic Ralph's words were. Despite their thinking at the time that he was merely emphasizing the intensity of his feeling for her, no one had any idea of what strange and unexplainable happenings were to take place in the years that lay ahead.

Whenever Ralph and Helen had a special occasion to celebrate, he would send her a bouquet containing three red roses, three white carnations and a single yellow rose. This floral gift had special meaning for them, for it personified the three boys and the three girls and the little number seven child (gender undetermined) that they planned to have in their family. "The yellow rose stands for the extra baby who'll determine who's the boss around the house. If it's a boy, *I'm* the boss."

"And what if it's a girl?" Helen would always laugh. "Does that mean you'll relinquish the throne to me?"

"Why, of course, madam," Ralph invariably answered.

But the laughter was to be short-lived. Two weeks before they were to be married, Ralph was killed in a tragic plane crash, and Helen's world crumbled around her. For Ralph had died on her birthday, April 12th.

The first tragedy in her life was magnified sevenfold when a bouquet containing three red roses, three white carnations and a single yellow rose arrived within the same hour that she received the heartbreaking news.

But that bouquet was the first—and last one she was to receive after Ralph's death that she was able to trace directly to him. Before boarding the plane to go on the business trip, Helen learned, Ralph had stopped into the florist's and ordered the bouquet. No card was enclosed.

Because she was a rather high-strung, nervous girl, Helen was unable to take the news, or the bouquet, lightly. She virtually went to pieces.

Despite the efforts of her friends to restore her to her usual good spirits, nothing they could do or say would alleviate her grief.

A psychiatrist was consulted and he suggested that Helen

should move to another city and pick up the pieces of her life in a change of scenery and pace. It was also suggested that she take a job in another field that would not remind her so much of Ralph, since they had met while she had been working as a secretary in the finance company's home office.

Unable to stand the approach and passing of her wedding day, Helen packed her things a few days earlier, and got into her car and drove away.

It was not until eight months later that Helen's parents and friends learned of her whereabouts. She had vanished into thin air and had not written home except for a brief note stating that she was doing well and that no one should worry about her.

Helen's parents and friends were due for a cruel shock when they found out that she had been committed to a mental hospital in another state. The manner in which they learned of this was shattering. She had attempted to take her own life and somehow, among her possessions and personal effects, one of the mental health workers had found her home address.

A letter arrived asking that Helen's parents help defray the costs of her hospitalization and treatment.

Of course, Helen's parents brought her home at once and placed her under the care of a psychiatrist in their own city. But this was not until they had learned what happened.

As soon as Helen had arrived in the distant city to which she had removed herself, she found a job in a law office as a typist and rented a small efficiency apartment which she shared with another girl.

On the day she moved into the apartment, just as she was in the midst of unpacking her suitcases and getting settled, the doorbell rang.

Helen's roommate went to the door, opened it, and exclaimed, "Why, no one's here. But what's this?"

Helen came to the door holding several hangers upon which she had just arranged her best blouses. "Who was it?" she asked.

"I don't know. When I opened the door, just this big box was there."

Helen casually asked, "Well, what are you waiting for? Open it and see who sent you that."

The girl opened the box. At the moment the lid was lifted, Helen shrank back, dropping the clothes, stifling an outcry.

Three red roses, three white carnations and a yellow rose were inside the box. There was no card.

In less than half an hour, Helen hastily packed her things, moved out of the apartment and drove away from that city. She did not stop driving until she was nearly a thousand miles west of her hometown.

Again she found a job, this time as a file clerk in an insurance company, and again she rented a small apartment, but one which she was to share with no one.

After several weeks on her new job and in the new environment, Helen started to snap out of it. A few of the young men with whom she worked began to ask for dates and before long she was as busy as she wanted to be.

Again her new life was to be short-lived. The past caught up with her one night when she was entertaining a date and another young couple in her apartment. Helen was in the kitchenette, fixing sandwiches when there was a rap on the front door.

"Get that, will you?" she called.

A minute later, carrying a tray of canapes into the living room, Helen stopped in her tracks. Her date was slowly entering the room with a puzzled expression on his face. "If that isn't the craziest thing," he said. "I opened that door not ten seconds after we heard the rap but whoever it was must have vanished into thin air. He left this box for you, Helen."

At the sight of the florist's box, her face paled. Without asking permission to open it, the young man did so. At the sight of the familiar floral arrangement Helen screamed, dropped the tray and collapsed. The day after that another bouquet arrived. Helen went completely to pieces. The next day she was in the hospital.

Nearly two years after a concentrated period of psychiatric treatment, Helen was pronounced fully recovered from her breakdown.

Although the mysterious bouquets continued to arrive after she had been released from the hospital and had returned home, and her parents had spent many hundreds of dollars in an attempt to trace the origin of the bouquets, no one has ever learned who sent them, who delivered them, or from where they had come.

The unexplainable may now never be answered because on the first of June, 1964, Helen was married.

And since her marriage, the bouquets ceased to arrive.

DEAD MEN DO TELL TALL TALES

THE YOUNG state prosecutor, Lester Keenan, stepped out of the shower that bright morning in September feeling cheerful because the day promised to be a big one in his life.

It was the day when he was to arraign a murder suspect in what was certain to be an open and shut case that he would win for the state hands-down.

As he towelled himself dry, Lester began to feel stifled. It was as though there had been too much steam in the bathroom. Then, suddenly he had the uncanny feeling that he was not alone.

He stopped towelling himself and gaped at one of the most incredible sights he had ever witnessed.

A huge swirling cloud of steam had appeared before the full length bathroom mirror in the shape of a human being. Transfixed, he watched as the unearthly-appearing cloud hovered at the mirror.

Then he realized what the cloud had been doing. It had been scrawling something on the mirror, as one might write with his finger.

With a dreadful tingling sensation electrifying his flesh, Lester moved toward the mirror and gasped at what he saw written there. The words were legible and the letters were distinctly clear. He read it, then as he repeated it again, aloud, the writing began to vanish.

"Ask Haversahl why I didn't try to protect myself when he came at me with the knife. Ask *him* why I kept saying over and over, Haversahl, why are you doing this to me, your best friend?"

Lester Keenan's first impulse was to rush to the phone and tell the others in the state attorney's office what he had just witnessed. Then he caught himself. He realized that they would think he was insane if he so much as hinted that he had gotten a clue from some supernatural cloud of steam that had assumed the form of a man while he was in the bathroom.

No, he decided. He would play it cool. During his investigation of the case, he had questioned the man named Haversahl but had dismissed him from his mind as a possible suspect. No apparent motive, an airtight alibi, and a repu-

tation that was admirable; all that was Haversahl. No reason in the world to suspect him.

Lester dressed and had breakfast. His thoughts gradually began to trouble him. Suppose he *was* indicting the wrong man?

Putting his coffee cup down suddenly, Lester made up his mind. He would postpone the hearing set for that morning and instead, pay a surprise visit to Haversahl.

The murder victim, who was a partner in a food brokerage firm, had been a well-liked man without a known enemy in the world. Only one man seemed to be in a position to gain materially from his death and that was the man Lester Keenan had built a case against and indicted.

Everything was nice and neat. It seemed madness to mess things up, now, at this stage of the game. But still, if there was the slightest doubt now, how would he be able to sleep nights if he sent the wrong man to the death house?

Haversahl, who had been a friend of the murder victim, apparently had nothing whatsoever to gain from the victim's death.

Or had he?

Then Lester remembered Haversahl, his elegant clothing, his trim little mustache, the swank bachelor apartment in which he lived, overlooking the bay and the packaging business he owned.

The victim was among Haversahl's customers. If anything, he would not gain, but lose as a result of the man's death.

Or would he?

The victim had been married to a lovely woman, many years his junior. It was rumored that she had a roving eye for an attractive man.

And Haversahl was an eligible, attractive man . . .

A half-hour later Lester Keenan was standing outside the door to Haversahl's apartment. Before knocking, he carefully thought over what he would say and how to ask the questions which had so strangely appeared on his bathroom mirror.

As he deliberated he heard voices coming from the apartment. One was a man's, the other, a woman's voice.

Since Lester Keenan had not been a state attorney long enough to have lost his timidity, he lifted his hand as if to knock on the door. At that instant the door slowly began to swing open.

He looked in. And there he saw Haversahl with the re-

cently bereaved widow of the murder victim. Her widow's garments were carelessly tossed upon a chair.

Lester cleared his throat.

The widow grabbed her clothes and cleared out of the room.

Haversahl and the young prosecutor stood face to face. All barriers began to tumble down.

Lester asked the questions and Haversahl cracked, going to pieces before his very eyes.

Needless to say Lester Keenan arraigned the real murderer, Haversahl, and won his open and shut case, hands down.

All because dead men do tell tales—or do they merely write them down in a cloud of steam?

When his associates asked Lester Keenan *how* he managed to crack the case, he was smart enough to tap his forehead with a finger and wink knowingly, saying, "Always look for the clue in a mirror!"

THE JUNGLE TELEGRAPH: PSYCHIC PHENOMENA OR REALITY?

THE GROUP OF THREE American explorers and their native bearers set out from Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika, in trucks. Their destination was the African jungle wilds just north of Njembe. The purpose of their safari was twofold. They had been commissioned by several drug manufacturers to bring back a number of exotic plants which were known to grow only in that area, and they had also been commissioned by an American University to take tape recordings of the jungle drums.

After they reached a settlement on the Ruaha River, they left their trucks, crossed over, and set out on foot with two native guides leading the way.

The packs containing their miniature recording equipment were carried by the Americans. All of the other gear was toted by the natives.

They did not want the natives to know they were there for the purpose *also* of making tape recordings of their jungle telegraph. Because they had learned that absolute secrecy was necessary, the men had agreed to refrain from any discussion whatsoever of their plans to record the drums. Each man knew what his task was and they were to fulfill them independently of one another.

After a three-day trek into the interior they located the first of the plants and herbs they had been commissioned to collect. Within two weeks they had found all but several of the exotic plants they needed, and whenever the drums were heard, the men surreptitiously made recordings of the rhythmic throbbings.

As they reached a particularly dense sector of the jungle they suddenly found themselves surrounded by a group of armed tribesmen who were smeared with warpaint. The leader of the armed men spoke in a dialect that one of the guides understood.

"Chief fella wants to know why you here taking word pictures of jungle drums," the guide told them.

The Americans remained poker faced and denied the accusation.

"Chief says you lie. He knows you are here to listen to drums."

Although they had maintained the utmost secrecy and had not mentioned a single word of what they were doing when they had turned on their concealed recorders, they were flabbergasted. How was it possible for the natives to know this?

When they continued to deny what they had been doing, the armed natives began to close in, forming a ring around them, menacing them with their spears.

The native bearers huddled together, shaking and wailing in terror. Just then two witch doctors appeared, rattling gourds at the Americans and chanting in a sing-song fashion. This went on for nearly an hour when a staccato burst of drums was heard reverberating throughout the jungle all around them.

Moments later the tribesmen vanished in the jungle.

"What do you fellows make of that?" one of the men asked.

The others shrugged and looked to their interpreter for the explanation. The native only grinned toothily at them and shouldered his pack. "We told to get out and not come here any more."

The bearers, who obviously had understood enough of what had been going on, hastily reloaded the gear they had been carrying and started north again at a rapid pace.

When they had returned to their hotel in Dar es Salaam a few days later, the tapes were collected and the men locked themselves in their room to listen.

The first tapes they had made shortly after entering the

jungle were excellent. However the tapes which had been recorded after they had penetrated the mysterious depths of the rain forest were strangely indistinct. One of the men had two reels of tape which had been made a few hours before they had been waylaid by the tribesmen. When those tapes were played not a sound could be heard.

Whether they had stumbled upon something that would have enabled the communications professors at the university to "break" the mystery of the jungle telegraph, they had no way of knowing. But what was even more incredible was the fact that somehow the natives had known what they were doing, and had managed to erase the tapes.

How had they been able to do this without touching the machines?

Had it been the jungle telegraph that had told them there were outsiders poking into their secrets?

We may someday know, when and if civilized man is ever to fathom the mind of his primitive brother.

THE SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH OF A MOTHER

Mrs. Lucille W. Pratt, a 101-pound housewife living in Philadelphia, had an errand to run one cold December morning that necessitated leaving her five year old son with some older children who were playing in the snow in her front yard.

When she returned several minutes later and started across the street, she began to scream and broke into a desperate run.

Her little boy was playing in the snow in the driveway of a house nearby. A truck, which had been parked in the drive, was beginning to roll backwards, its tandem wheels heading straight for the child.

The speed with which she raced across the street was incredible. She reached the tail gate of the truck just as the rear wheels were within a foot of the boy's body. She was not close enough to grab the child in time.

There was only one thing to do, stop the truck from rolling backward.

Without thinking about the seemingly impossible thing she had to do, Lucille braced herself and desperately leaned both hands against the back of the truck. At first it continued to move toward her and the boy, who was only inches from its rear wheels.

Then it stopped rolling.

She pushed with all her might and began to scream, telling her son to get out from under the truck.

The child started out, crawling on all fours and slipped on the icy walk, his little body now against the tandem wheels.

With her arms thrusting against the truck, Lucille peered beneath it and gave it another tremendous shove. The truck moved several feet forward, the child crawled out, and at that moment, the truck driver came out of the house where he had been making a delivery, leapt into the truck and set the brake.

It was a miracle that the truck had been stopped at all.

Several of Lucille's neighbors who had witnessed the amzing feat of strength, came rushing toward her.

As Lucille hugged her son and wept for joy, the truck driver and her neighbors crowded around expressing their awe at what had happened.

Was this just another example of the superhuman strength of a mother's love? Or had Mrs. Lucille W. Pratt been blessed with a divine gift of superstrength at the very moment when it was needed most?

WHAT STRANGE FORCE TOOK OVER THE CONTROLS?

ED WAS an experienced airline pilot with more time logged in the air than most people have logged behind the wheel of a land-locked automobile. And in all the years of his experience Ed had never before gone through an uncanny occurrence like the one that had happened to him in January of 1964.

While flying a fan jet on what is termed in airline pilot's parlance as a "milk run," Ed had just checked with the tower of the airport at which they were scheduled to arrive in fifteen minutes and settled back in his seat to relax for a moment, when everything went awry.

Although his hands were on the controls and his co-pilot and engineer were in the cabin with him sipping coffee, some unseen force had taken over the controls!

"My God!" he cried. "Something's frozen the controls."

Before the co-pilot and engineer had a chance to put their coffee cups aside, the plane which had been whispering along at 18,000 feet, suddenly side-slipped and went into a

dive. Their cruising speed was in excess of 500 mph, and there were thirty-six passengers aboard.

As Ed and the co-pilot struggled desperately to pull back the controls and ease out of the screaming dive, the engineer yelled, "Look out!"

They glanced up in time to see a weirdly shimmering blue-white light hurtling toward them on what appeared to be a collision course. A split-second before impact the object maneuvered sharply and vanished out of sight.

The controls were abruptly released and Ed managed to level off. They had dived nine thousand feet.

In the next split-second following the leveling off of the plane, three glowing discs were seen directly above them traveling at the same rate of speed.

Ed began a gentle climbing maneuver in order to return to his course. The position of the plane enabled the three men to observe the unidentified flying objects for several minutes before they suddenly veered off and disappeared into the sun.

"Will you check to see if the passengers are all right?" Ed asked the engineer who hurried aft immediately.

Ed then cast a worried look at his co-pilot. "What do you make of that?" he asked.

The co-pilot shrugged and wiped the perspiration from his brow with his sleeve. "I wish to God I knew. But whatever it was that grabbed the controls, also saved our lives."

The mystery of the UFOs which have been plaguing modern man for decades may one day be solved when whoever or whatever is behind them sees fit to make itself known.

The United States Air Force, under the Department of Defense, has been conducting an investigation of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) since 1948 under the name of Project Blue Book. This investigation has also been identified in the past as Project Sign and Project Grudge.

The interest of the Air Force in UFOs is directly related to the Air Force responsibility for the air defense of the United States. The procedures for conducting the program are spelled out by Air Force Regulation 200-2.

Project Blue Book's objectives are to determine whether UFOs threaten our security and to determine whether they exhibit any unique scientific research. The project attempts to identify and explain all UFO sightings reported.

However, there was no logical comment to be made on

the frightening experience of Ed and his crew aboard the fan jet airliner.

Of the 8,908 UFO sightings reported during the period from 1947 through 1964, the Air Force explained away all but 663, which have gone down in the records as "Unidentifieds." While there have been many who have claimed to have taken pictures of UFOs, the Air Force denies that any photographs exist.

The Air Force officially states that so far, no unidentified flying object reported, investigated, and evaluated has ever given any indication of a threat to our national security; that no evidence exists which indicate that UFOs represent technological developments beyond the scope of present day scientific knowledge; and, finally that there has been no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as unidentified are extraterrestrial vehicles.

The Air Force does not deny the possibility that some form of life may exist on other planets in the universe. However, to date, the Air Force has neither received nor discovered any evidence which proves the existence and intraspace mobility of extraterrestrial life.

So says the Air Force.

DOCTOR ANSWERS MYSTERIOUS CALL OF MERCY

Dr. Guy L. Olsen, a prominent surgeon from a large city in the northeastern United States, has never missed a hunting trip during the past twelve seasons to the wild country north of Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada. He has become so familiar with the country that he is able to get around quite well without a guide.

In fact, Dr. Olsen welcomes the peaceful tranquility of the lonely forests of central Manitoba and whenever he feels in need of a sabbatical, he will often fly his float-equipped plane up to his favorite hunting grounds and weekend there.

For some reason unknown to Dr. Olsen, late in August of 1963, he found himself winging his way up to the tributary of the Nelson River that feeds the waters of the Hudson Bay into the northern neck of Lake Winnipeg. Although he had rarely hunted in that sector and was unfamiliar with the lay of the land, he had a strong compulsion to go there anyway.

Giving in to his whim, he landed in a sheltered cove and

unpacked his gear, pitching his tent on the banks of the water a few yards from where he had moored his plane.

Without quite knowing why, he tossed a few medical supplies in his knapsack with some provisions, took his rifle and a box of ammunition and began to hike along the perimeter of a forest.

By five o'clock that afternoon he reached a clearing which overlooked a scenic valley. Nestled against a hillside was a crude house with a jeep parked in front. He guessed that the vehicle belonged to a timberman because it had been rigged with a winch containing a reel of wire rope which is used by lumbermen to work logs. He approached the cabin and was greeted by two cavorting, barking dogs.

A woman in her late twenties emerged and hailed him. Dr. Olsen smilingly patted the dogs and went toward the house.

"I hardly expected to find anyone living way out here," he grinned.

The woman, a ruddy cheeked big-boned French-Canadian, smiled briefly and then said to him in French, "Do you know where there is a doctor?"

Taken aback, the surgeon replied, "Who's ill?"

"It's my husband," she said worriedly. "It's a terrible sickness he has."

"Let's have a look," he told her, shrugging the pack off his shoulders and following her inside.

As he hastily examined the powerfully built man who lay on a bed in the plainly furnished bedroom of the three-room cabin, the woman began to weep and stammer, "I've been praying and praying that a doctor should come and help Jacques. I don't know what to do. The pain has been getting worse and—"

Dr. Olsen reached for his pack and withdrew his emergency kit. When he unfolded his stethoscope the French woman cried out in amazement, unable to speak. Her eyes, brimming full of tears did the talking for her, expressing what her heart said.

Finally when she regained her composure, she asked, "He will be all right?"

"I'm a surgeon," the doctor told her. "He has acute appendicitis. I'll have to operate at once if we're to save his life, before peritonitis sets in."

After the operation which turned out successfully, Dr. Olsen took a long drink of the strong whiskey which he had used to anesthetize his patient and relaxed in a big chair before the fireplace.

The next morning, after checking on his patient and while waiting for the hearty breakfast the woman was preparing for them, he went outside and sauntered over to the jeep. Then he knew why the woman had been unable to take her husband to the nearest doctor, who, he was later to learn, lived thirty miles away. The jeep had engine trouble and wouldn't run.

As he winged back toward home the following day, the surgeon found himself wondering what power from beyond called him on that errand of mercy. Why had he flown to that remote sector, and *what* had guided him to the lumberjack's isolated cabin where the dangerously ill man awaited him?

Was it the prayers of the man's wife he had answered? Or was it merely a coincidence?

THE REFUGEE'S SON HAD A VISION

JUAN L. AND his mother left communist Cuba in 1962 and made their home in Miami on S. W. 6th Street, in the heart of "Little Cuba."

Juan's father, Armando, had been unable to leave with the other refugees because he had to look after his aged parents and a sister. But once they had safely left the island, then he would be able to go.

Nearly a year elapsed before arrangements could be made for Armando's sister and parents to flee to the United States. When they were safely across, he set about making plans for his own flight to freedom.

Unfortunately, because they were afraid that G-2 would arrest Armando, his wife and son did not write to him. As a result, they lost touch with one another.

When Armando's sister and parents finally arrived in the United States, Juan and his mother had no way of knowing they were there or if they had arrived at all.

Then one night while Juan was asleep he awakened abruptly, hearing his name being called.

It was his father's voice!

Juan began to tremble. He squeezed his eyes shut and listened, unable to believe what he was hearing. Again and again he heard his father calling him.

Then he whispered, "Yes, I hear you, father. I hear you."

As soon as he had uttered those words, he got the feeling of motion, like that of being aboard a small boat.

All of a sudden he saw his father. He was sprawled out in the bottom of a tiny boat with a broken mast. The boat was adrift.

Unable to sleep any longer because the reality of his "vision" had such an overwhelming impact upon him, Juan quietly got dressed and crept out of the small apartment, careful to not disturb his mother, who was asleep in the other room.

He went down to the marina on the Miami River where he often went to talk with the boat captains who occasionally took him fishing with them, and began to wander along, looking at all the vessels and wishing that he owned one.

If he owned one right now, he thought, he'd fill it up with gas and go out into the ocean and find his father!

Then Juan stopped walking. He was standing alongside the pier where a sleek fiberglass cruiser was moored. It was a fast job, capable of speeds in excess of twenty knots. He looked at it longingly. The name on the hull was familiar to him. It belonged to a prominent Cuban businessman who had fled to the states shortly after Castro had risen to power and who had done well financially in his adopted country.

Impulsively, Juan suddenly went aboard the vessel. He found the cabin unlocked and went below. The time was one A.M. It was so quiet that he could hear the ticking of the brass ship's clock.

This was some boat, Juan thought. With such a boat he could go all the way to Cuba and back before the owner would miss it.

He could also go out into the ocean and find his father.

And thinking about his father in the silence of the boat cabin, Juan began to cry.

Something deep inside him took hold of his emotions. He suddenly began to think that his father would be ashamed of him if he could see him crying. He thought of what his father would do if *he* were somewhere out on the ocean, adrift in a little boat, probably without food or water.

On impulse, Juan hurried topside, turned on the ignition and checked the fuel gauges. The tanks were full.

It was an omen; of that, little Juan was positive.

He stealthily released the moorings aft and forward and with a boathook, nudged the craft into the channel. As he drifted with the current, he relished what he was doing because he *believed* wholeheartedly that he was doing the right thing. Somehow, he did not feel that he was stealing the boat. He was merely borrowing it for a short while. He

knew that the owner of the boat was a loyal Cuban, a friend and compatriot, and if he knew the circumstances, Juan was sure that the man would encourage him to do exactly what he was doing now.

Then Juan wondered if it wouldn't be better if he told the boat owner first, and asked for permission to borrow the boat.

But who would loan an expensive boat like this to a mere boy of 15? And who would believe that such a search was justified because of the "vision" of a 15-year-old boy?

Juan cracked the throttles and turned the switches. Both engines immediately responded and began to purr. It was a good feeling and as he felt the surge of power under the deck and the torque of the props against the wheel in his hands, Juan grew aware of a strange new feeling, a feeling of confidence and certainty of purpose that he had never before known.

Within the hour, he was heading south-south-east on a steady course which he instinctively felt was the right course, the *only* course for him to steer.

At daylight, Juan climbed up to the flying bridge where he could command a better view of the horizon. His heart began to pound with mounting anxiety as time went by.

Never once did he get the feeling that what he was doing was wrong. The complete sensation of belief in himself and in the course he was steadily pursuing never wavered.

He was neither hungry nor thirsty. And although his boyish curiosity had nagged at him, tempting him to see if there was any food aboard, he rejected it, thinking that he dared not leave the bridge for fear that he might somehow miss seeing his father.

By noon that day, Juan was more than ever convinced that his father was out there on the ocean somewhere, adrift in the boat he had envisioned.

Only once that day had he seen another craft, and that was a small cruiser heading toward Florida.

Alone on the sea, Juan could think of nothing else except finding his father.

It was nearly three o'clock when he noticed for the first time that the tanks were reaching the halfway mark. If he was to get the boat safely back, he either had to find his father now, within the next thirty minutes, or turn back.

The next twenty-five minutes were sheer torture. A cold sweat filmed his lithe young body despite the heat of the blazing tropic sun. Then he found himself fingering his

miraculous medal, his lips moving in a fervent prayer. He had to be right, he had to! The vision he had had was too real; he had seen his father! With all his heart he believed that. "Please, God," he cried out, "please, don't let me be wrong."

Just as the gauges reached the indicators he cut the engines. With the binoculars he had found in one of the lockers he scanned the horizon. He saw nothing.

His eyes felt blurred and he was unable to tell if it was because of eyestrain or because he had had nothing to eat all day. He decided to go below. Perhaps he might find something to eat and then, maybe, he'd take one last look and turn back.

Juan found a can of tuna fish and opened it. He ate slowly, not tasting the food at all. Then he looked at the clock. It was nearly four.

With his feet feeling like leaden weights, he slowly mounted the ladder to the deck, then climbed up to the flying bridge. He picked up the binoculars and focused them carefully, peering around and around at the horizon.

Nothing but sea and sky, as far as the eye could see.

He reluctantly reached for the switches, about to start the engines when suddenly he found that he could not do it. Some strange power from deep inside him made him reach instead for the binoculars which he had laid aside. He picked them up again and climbed up to the pilot's seat. With one foot resting on the seat of the pilot's chair and the other precariously placed upon the windshield upright, Juan slowly began to sweep the horizon.

At that precise moment the boat started to rock as a rising breeze began to stir up the ocean. The craft rode up a wave and down another, up, and then down. This action enabled him to see further, but also prevented him from holding the glasses steady.

And that's when Juan spotted something white on the distant horizon.

His heart leapt and he jumped down, started the engines and began to speed toward the object he had sighted. The minutes dragged as he steered with one hand and kept the binoculars fixed on the tiny white speck he'd seen in the distance with the other. Then suddenly he was able to make it out. There was no doubt about it. It *was* a boat!

It had a broken mast. And it was obviously adrift.

Twenty minutes later, with his heart pounding in his

throat, Juan cut the engines and drew alongside the tiny boat.

A man, face down in the bottom of the boat, stirred at the sound of Juan's excited outcries. He pushed himself up and weakly turned.

"Father!" Juan screamed with joy, catching the bulwarks of the little boat with the gaff in one hand while leaning over with his other hand eagerly extended.

Armando managed to stand. At the sight of his son whom he had never expected to see again, he wept. Seizing his son's hand and kissing it and offering up a prayer of thanksgiving, Armando clung there for a long moment before he could muster enough strength to climb aboard the sleek cruiser.

On the way back to Miami, the Coast Guard, alerted for the missing boat, took them into custody.

When the owner of the pirated vessel learned what had happened, and actually spoke with Armando and Juan, the first thing he said was, "Santa Maria, my boat was used to perform a miracle!" He did not press charges.

Shortly after Armando was reunited with his wife, the whereabouts of his parents and sister were learned. Today, Armando and his son Juan never mention the miraculous "vision" that had brought them together. Just the smiles on their faces are reminders enough.

MOTHER "SEES" HER TRAPPED SONS

Mrs. Pearl Kerns was one of those mothers who constantly fretted about her children. It was not that she was what one would call "doting." It was because she couldn't be at home to watch them.

And she had good reason to worry. Ten-year-old Billy and twelve-year-old Craig were always getting into trouble.

They were not particularly bad boys. But they had nothing to do while they were in the house alone after school and during the summer vacations.

Pearl worked hard every day from eight to five as a checker in a small Chicago factory, but she did not earn enough to be able to afford to pay someone to look after her fatherless boys. After the rent and utilities were paid and the groceries and the clothes they were always needing were purchased, there wasn't enough left over for a luxury such as a baby sitter.

One day shortly after lunch was over, Pearl found that she was unable to concentrate on her work. As time went on, she began to experience a strong feeling of uneasiness. She finally had to punch her time card and rush home in order to allay her nervousness. When she arrived, and it was well that she had come home early, she found Billy and Craig trapped on the roof where they had climbed to "hide out" while playing hookey from school that day. They had managed to get up, but couldn't get down.

Things went reasonably well after that escapade, until several months had passed and the boys began to grow restless again. This time when they played hookey, they didn't go directly home. They decided to investigate a roped-off area that was undergoing the razing of buildings and stores to make way for a slum clearance project.

Once again Pearl found herself extremely ill at ease while at work. She found that not only was she unable to do her job, but that an awful feeling of dread had come over her. Without quite understanding why she felt as she did, she left her job and rushed home.

It was nearly noon and she felt relieved somewhat because she had not found them there. She had all but decided that maybe they had gone to school after all, when something made her check their room. She saw their school books right away and felt certain that her odd feeling had been some sort of a forewarning.

As though she knew where to find them, Pearl set out on foot, walking rapidly through the neighborhood, heading toward the slum clearance area.

Without quite knowing why, Pearl felt a gnawing sensation clutching her insides. The nearer she got to the condemned buildings, the stronger the feeling of apprehension became.

She broke into a run, drawn toward the deserted streets of the blocked-off neighborhood. Before her loomed the windowless fronts of vacated stores and other business establishments.

She tried to figure out where they might possibly have gone or where they might be by putting herself in their shoes. Instinctively, Pearl found herself entering an abandoned market. She cautiously walked inside and peered around in the gloom. In the back of the market were several huge walk-in type meat storage boxes. She stared at them and felt her flesh crawl.

Gingerly, Pearl stepped around the rubble and went to-

ward the closed doors of the ice boxes. She opened them with some effort and when she looked inside, burst into hysterical screams.

Craig and Billy were just inside the door of the second box. Their little bodies were on the floor. Their faces were turning blue for lack of air.

Pearl grabbed them both up in her arms and staggered out of the building. Where she had garnered the strength to lift two ninety pound boys and rush out of the building is a mystery.

Because someone had seen her running into the roped-off sector, the police had been called. A prowl car was on the look-out for her and she was spotted emerging from the abandoned market.

After first aid and oxygen had been given them, Billy and Craig recovered sufficiently to be permitted to walk home with their mother.

Since that time in 1953, Pearl never had any further trouble with her sons. In fact, Billy is a graduate engineer and Craig holds a civil service job as a fireman.

Psychic phenomenon or instinct, call it what you will, but the proof is that truth is stranger than fiction. Hardly a day passes in the average big city that something unexplainable such as Mrs. Pearl Kerns' experience fails to occur.

THE NAZIS COULDN'T KEEP THEM APART

HERMAN LEVINSKY'S only crime was that of being a Jew in Nazi Germany.

For thirty of his fifty years Herman had worked as a pharmacist in the city of Hamburg. He and his wife, Olga, lived two blocks from the pharmacy in a modest, six-room apartment.

All their lives they had been childless and though they had not been blessed with offspring, they were blessed in another way. They were deeply in love and were one of the most devoted couples in all of Hamburg.

During one of the first purges of Jews in Hamburg, when Hitler's reign of persecution and terror began, Herman went home to tell Olga of the heavy weight in his heart caused by the anguish of seeing a young Jewish couple arrested on the street outside the pharmacy. The couple had been friends of theirs and it had made him ill just to watch and be unable to do anything about it.

As he was about to put the key in the lock to his front door he noticed that it was slightly ajar. Perhaps Olga had gone out for a moment to borrow something from a neighbor, he thought, as he went in and started to take off his coat and hat.

But then he noticed that something seemed wrong. The apartment was cold. He frowned and went to the stove. The fire was out. It had been lighted that morning when he had left and there had been plenty of coal.

A sudden dread clutched at him like the chill in the apartment. With a pounding heart, he hurried out of the apartment and went down one flight to the door directly below their own.

He rapped on it and it opened a crack almost at once. It was Hans, one of his oldest friends. But Hans was not friendly then. "What do you want, Herman?"

The sound of his voice was enough to shake him to the very marrow of his bones. "Have you seen Olga?"

"We have been warned not to associate with you Jews. Go away."

"But, Hans, this is your old friend. Just because they have told you—"

"Go away!"

Stunned, Herman turned away from the door. He started to walk up to his apartment, hoping that perhaps Olga had just gone out and would return in a short while.

But Herman was not to enter that apartment again, that night or ever.

The rumble of many trucks with their bloodcurdling sirens could be heard everywhere outside. He heard too, the sound of heavy boots approaching. Footsteps suddenly began to charge up the stairs, next door and in the houses throughout the neighborhood. A squad of Nazi storm troopers stopped him, grabbed him and dragged him roughly down the stairs to a waiting truck.

After many hours of an impossibly rough journey he was let out of the truck and marched into a barracks. He was in a slave labor camp where he was to work all day and lie awake night after night for the next two years, dying a thousand deaths.

What made it worse for Herman than the arduous physical labor was the worry and uncertainty and fear of what had happened to his beloved wife, Olga.

Gradually, the mild mannered, gentle pharmacist became inured to the brutality of concentration camp life. More-

over, the physical labor had toughened him to the point where he could withstand anything, even a physical beating.

The day when a new contingent of slave laborers arrived nearly two years after he had been at the concentration camp, was the day when Herman's hopes soared. Among the new arrivals was a man who had known both Herman and his wife.

They were able to huddle together to keep warm later that evening, when they were finally permitted to rest. The guards were not watching, and Herman had the first news of his wife since the day of his arrest. Olga had been arrested too. She had not escaped as he foolishly hoped. She had been confined in a woman's labor camp less than seventy kilometres from the concentration camp they were in. The man, whose wife was among the inmates along with Olga, had been planning for some time to escape and to rescue his wife. Since they both were in the same position, perhaps they could help one another, he suggested.

He now told Herman that he had deliberately arranged, by bribing a guard, to be sent to the stalag where Herman was. There were two reasons why he did this. The first was because he would be closer to his wife. The second was that Herman was a pharmacist and would know something about chemicals and perhaps would also know how to make explosives.

Herman agreed at once. The plans were made and the newcomer arranged to have the necessary chemicals smuggled into the camp.

During a snowstorm one night Herman and his friend escaped. They found shelter from the storm in the forests and eventually worked their ways to the woman's prison camp, sleeping by day and traveling by night, managing to make a few kilometres each day.

Once they reached their destination, they found themselves faced with an insurmountable task. The camp was heavily guarded and an electrified fence surrounded both the outer and inner boundaries of the compound. But Herman was undaunted. He and his companion decided upon a daring plan. They would blow up the guard towers and the building in which the electric generator was housed and attempt to set the entire barracks area on fire where the Nazi garrison guarding the camp was billeted.

Just as they were set to put their daring plan into action one night, a convoy of trucks arrived and every woman confined in the camp was taken away.

Herman wept openly as he watched. His companion, unable to believe his own eyes, snatched up several of the homemade bombs and charged the prison guard position, cursing, shouting and yelling as he hurled the grenades. Horrorstricken, Herman watched as the first bomb exploded just short of its mark, the guard tower at the entrance. Suddenly a dozen rifles and machine guns turned in the man's direction and chopped him down.

Defeated, his hopes dashed, Herman gathered up the few effects the man had left behind, packed them into a bundle with his own things and began to trudge north.

Weeks went by. Somehow Herman wandered north and managed to cross the German border without being captured. In a daze, he found himself in Copenhagen. How he got there and how he had managed to stay alive all that time he does not to this day know. Moreover, *why* he went there, what force impelled him to go on, is still a mystery.

He found work in a Copenhagen pharmacy, the only work he knew. Months passed, then one year, then two. The war was still raging. Hitler was still at the height of his power. But Herman was like a living dead man. He lived in the past, sometimes even talking to himself when he was alone in his small room.

Then, one morning in April of 1943, Herman felt a strange compulsion to walk. Instead of going to work that morning he wandered around the city. As though obeying some uncanny supernatural impulse he boarded a bus, paying the fare as he got on, not asking where the bus was going, not stopping to think, or ask himself where he was and why he was there.

The bus was crowded and Herman had to stand most of the way. He did not mind; his brain was clouded, his thoughts far away as if in a fog.

He disembarked at Gentofte, a city on the coast not too many kilometres north of Copenhagen. But why *this* city, this place in Denmark? Surely he did not expect to find Olga there, even if she *had* managed, by some miracle, to escape from the concentration camp. Surely, if Olga was to get away from Germany at all, she would head south, perhaps to Palestine, to the Promised Land she had so often talked about.

It was early afternoon. There was a chill in the air but Herman did not seem to mind. He was walking briskly through the streets, not aimlessly as he had so often walked

before, but moving with a purpose, as though he *knew* where he was going.

Then he found himself slowing down. He was in a marketplace. Tradespeople were hawking fish and cheeses and baked goods, but he moved by them without seeing them.

And then, Herman stopped before a fish stall. His tired eyes were fixed in a steady gaze on the back of a woman's head who was tending the stall. As though she felt him staring at her, the woman turned. Her eyes opened wide in surprise and recognition. Suddenly she cried out and rushed toward him with her arms extended.

It was Olga.

By some miracle, by some unexplainable force, Herman Levinsky had been reunited with his wife.

And all the while Olga had never ceased believing that someday, somehow, Herman would find her.

She had managed to escape from the convoy which had removed her from the concentration camp by an odd piece of luck. Noticing that the guards were standing with their backs to the truck she was on while the convoy had stopped to refuel, Olga climbed down and casually walked away. She hid in a ditch until the trucks had resumed the journey, then began to walk north, where she was found by some peasants who sheltered her and put her in touch with the underground. From there she was taken to Denmark and was given a job in the fish market where Herman found her.

"But how did you know I was alive? How did you know that I was here, in this city?" Olga asked him again and again, to which Herman could only answer that he did not know.

Today Herman and Olga Levinsky live in Tel Aviv, where they moved after the war. Herman still works as a pharmacist and when he comes home at night he does not look to see if there is a fire in the stove to warm the house. It does not get cold in the Promised Land.

THE CHILDREN WERE GUIDED BY THEIR DEAD PARENTS

WHEN TRAGIC circumstances disrupt a family, oftentimes the after-effects are more damaging than the tragedy itself.

One such tragedy befell Arlene and Donald C. Their parents were killed in an automobile accident when they

were barely in their teens, thrusting them into the world as hapless orphans.

They were never able to get over the loss of their parents, and as a consequence they rebelled against every effort their relatives made to help them.

"We don't want your help and we don't want your pity!" Arlene screamed at the uncle and grandparents with whom they had gone to live. "Donnie and I would manage pretty well if you all would only just leave us alone. Isn't that right, Donnie?"

Donald readily agreed with his older sister. He had been drawn closer to her and she to him since their parents had died, and in the confines of their tightly knotted relationship they had somehow sublimated their frustration at not having the love and understanding of parents by looking to each other for comfort and solace.

When the children were sixteen and seventeen years of age, Arlene announced very calmly that she and her brother were fed up with being told what to do by people who were not their parents and who had no business bossing them around.

With the proceeds of a trust which had been set up for them with the insurance money, there was enough for them to live on if they took an apartment by themselves. Their grandparents and other relatives threw up their hands in dismay and stopped trying to get them to listen to reason.

Arlene and Donald rented a small two bedroom apartment near the high school to which they went, and all seemed to be going just fine for them. But the guilt for having disobeyed and shown their relatives such disrespect began to tell on them. Before long, Arlene and Donald were at each other's throats. She complained that he did not help her enough and he complained that she was always trying to boss him around and treat him as if he were her son instead of her brother.

As time passed, the fights became more frequent. Then one afternoon after Arlene had come home from school, she accused Donald of being lazy and careless because he had not made his bed before leaving the apartment that morning. Donald had had about enough of that and when words would not express the way he felt, he resorted to violence. He hit his sister in the eye and knocked her down.

Arlene went into hysterics and screamed that she was going to kill herself.

"Go on, who the heck cares?" he yelled after her, slamming out of the house.

When his temper had cooled, he returned. It was past the supper hour and although he was sorry, he still felt somewhat angry because of the way she had been treating him.

As usual, Arlene was keeping the supper warm for her brother. She stood aside in the kitchenette as he entered, glaring and tapping her foot. He ignored her and sat down. When he happened to look up and see the ugly shiner he had inflicted upon her, a pang of guilt stabbed at him.

He stammered an apology and Arlene burst into tears and then ran into her bedroom. Nothing he could do or say seemed to help. "You ought to be ashamed," she cried. "Hitting me after all I've tried to do to keep what's left of our family together."

Donald calmly got up and went into the kitchen. He closed the window and carefully wadded some towels under the doors. Then he turned on the gas and sat down at the table to wait until the fumes took affect.

After a while Arlene smelled the gas and came rushing into the kitchen. "What do you think you're doing?" she cried. "Are you crazy?"

He laughed in her face. "Yes, I must be crazy to put up with you. What good am I? I might as well be dead. Who cares if I live or die? You said yourself that I was no good and lazy."

Arlene plumped herself down into a chair opposite him at the table. "Okay. I'll die with you," she announced, taking a deep sniff of the gas fumes.

As they sat facing each other, stubbornly and foolishly defying themselves and life, too, Donald said, "This is the best thing for us to do, don't you think?"

Arlene shrugged. "What's the use of living anyway. We'd both be better off dead. Mom and Dad don't know how lucky they were, getting killed like that. One minute they were here, and the next, poof! Gone like that."

At the mention of their deceased parents, tears began to shine in Donald's eyes. He bit his bottom lip and averted his face so she wouldn't see.

After a while Arlene asked, "Do you feel sleepy yet? I'm beginning to get drowsy and lightheaded."

He turned to look at her. A grim expression was on his face. "I don't feel a thing."

Gradually, the room began to appear blurred to both of

them. First Arlene rubbed her eyes, then Donald did likewise.

"You sure this is what you want, Donnie?"

"Yes, I'm sure."

"You don't care? I mean, *really* don't care?"

Donald, his head beginning to feel heavy, shrugged and murmured, "What's the difference?"

Suddenly there was a voice in the room. It was a familiar voice that caused them both to look up in surprise, expressions of awed incredulity masking their faces. "You *do* care, Donnie, you *do* care, and you don't want to end your life this way," the voice said.

Arlene choked back an outcry. *"Daddy!"* she gasped. "It is you, isn't it?"

Half rising from his chair, Donald froze, squinting and trying to clear the fog from his brain. He was trying to peer through the haze that seemed to swirl all about them, attempting to speak at the same time. But no words formed on his lips. He was gaping at the two indistinct shapes which were standing in the shadows.

"Dad?" he finally managed to stammer. "Is it—you—*Dad?* Mother? *Mother!"* he shouted suddenly, bursting into tears.

At the sound of her brother's weeping, Arlene began to cry. "We can't see you. Are you really there? Is it really you? In God's name, please, please, please talk to us!"

"There now, children," they heard their father's voice speak. "Stop acting like babies. You're almost grown up now and you've got a wonderful future in store for you. Is this any way for *my* daughter and son to behave? You know this isn't what you want. Neither of you really want to die. Now, do you?"

Sobbing and half-blinded by his tears, Donald admitted, "I don't know *what* I want, Dad. Since you—and mother—died. Nothing's been worth living for. It's all been so—so pointless."

"No, my son," the voice said gently, "there *is* a point to it all. You want to live and your sister wants to live. You want your mother and me to be proud of you, just as proud in death as we would have been in life. And we are just as proud, Donnie. Even though we're not there to share the laughter with you, we still are with you in spirit. Don't you know that? Don't *you* know that, Arlene?"

Unable to speak coherently, Arlene sobbed, "Y-yes. I do know it. I do!" Then, she shoved herself up from the table

and stumbled toward the stove where she hastily began to turn off the gas jets. Reeling around as though groggy and unable to get her bearings, Arlene pitched forward with her arms extended and somehow managed to find the window. She seized it and threw it open, turned and cried, "Daddy, are you still here, are you?"

"Yes, I'm still here."

"Is mother with you?"

"Yes."

"Talk to us, please, talk to us, won't you mother?"

"Listen to your father, children. Always remember that."

As the intensity of their emotions burst forth, brother and sister wept uncontrollably.

"Let this be the last time either of you ever attempts anything so foolhardy again," their father said. "Will you promise us that?"

"Yes, oh, yes!" they chorused.

"Very well. And what else will you promise?"

Donald was only able to mutter in a shaky voice, "To help each other. To stop fighting."

"And what else?" the voice of their father inquired.

"To plan our lives like you always wanted us to do," Arlene said, her body convulsing from deep, shuddering sighs.

"We're proud of you, children. Don't ever forget that. And even when you moved away from your grandparents to live by yourselves, you showed spunk and we liked that, too, although we would have preferred for you to have stayed with them. But it wasn't like home, so you did what you felt you must. We understand. We love you. Be happy. And above all, plan to live long, full, and rich lives."

As suddenly as they appeared, the spirits of the father and mother vanished. Suddenly, a cool breath of life-giving air swept into the room from the open window. The fog cleared from the youngsters' minds and they found themselves staring at each other through their tears, alone together in the room. Unable any longer to restrain herself, Arlene threw her arms around her brother and hugged him. It was as if they had been apart for a long, long time, and had just found each other again.

If Arlene and Donald had actually seen a supernatural manifestation of their deceased parents' spirits, or if the hysterical state of their emotions and the narcotic effect of the gas had caused them to hallucinate or conjure up a

hypnotically induced dream is of no consequence. The important thing was that they saw, heard, and obeyed.

And they *continued to obey* as is evidenced by the high scholastic attainments both subsequently achieved in high school and later, college. Moreover, there is no doubt that they will go on to live out two full, rich, and rewarding lives.

TO WHOM DID THE PREDICTION REALLY REFER?

THE FIRST WEEK of the new year in 1964, Jerry Banks and Ed Miller set out to find a mysterious old woman who reportedly lived in a house trailer just West of Hollywood, Florida. They were looking for this strange old woman as the result of stories they had heard concerning her uncanny ability to "foresee" the future.

In their own investigation of supernatural happenings, young Jerry Banks and Ed Miller had amassed a staggering collection of unexplainable events. They always sought to add still another, new and different story or series of stories to their collection.

But little did they realize that the experience they were about to encounter that week would have such a tremendous impact upon their lives.

It was on the evening of January 6th when the two men finally located the house trailer in which old "Missus Martha" lived. They introduced themselves and were enthusiastically welcomed inside by the kindly old woman who introduced them to her husband, aged 97. Old Martha's husband seemed remarkably spry and active and it was hard to believe that he was almost a hundred years old.

Martha explained that her husband owed his longevity to eating, of all things, charcoal! along with wheat germ and honey and other natural foods. As a vegetarian, Martha explained, her husband's life expectancy was far greater than that of other mortals who ate flesh. "But you gentlemen are not interested in our diets, I know," she told them with a twinkle in her eyes. "You have traveled all this distance to find out if it's true what they have been saying about me. If you'll just be seated, perhaps I may be of some help to you."

Although Ed and Jerry had not mentioned a single word about the purpose of their visit, Martha proceeded to tell them many personal things about themselves. This, to Ed

and Jerry, was not particularly impressive. They had known and visited many clairvoyants in their time and had listened to many others who "told" them things about themselves.

After a while, Old Martha closed her eyes and said in her thick Swiss accent: "Mr. Mühler (she persisted in addressing Ed Miller as Mister or Herr Mühler), exactly one year from today your wife will have very serious heart difficulties. These difficulties of the heart will become unbearable to her and will create much distress to all your loved ones. Remember the date, exactly one year from today."

Awed by the conviction in her tone, Ed and Jerry exchanged glances. The prediction did not sit well with them and later, during the long drive back to their homes in Miami, Ed turned to Jerry and said, "I don't know why, but I have an eerie feeling about what she said."

Jerry fired an amused glance at Ed. "Don't tell me you *believe* what she said? We both know your wife never had a sick day in her life—and heart trouble, that's out of the question."

Ed, however, was not convinced. He stared vacantly out of the window and in a hollow voice, said, "That's not what I mean. I had the strangest feeling, in fact *I know*, she was talking about me. She meant that something was going to happen to *me*."

Jerry's mouth opened with incredulity. His dark eyes blazed. "You're not serious, or are you, Ed?"

Ed Miller nodded. He contemplated his old friend and replied, "I was never more serious in my life. And though I know I've never had heart trouble or anything like that, she *was* predicting that . . . something was going to happen to me."

Jerry kept his thoughts to himself. He recalled how the old woman had spoken to them. He recalled every detail of the interior of that house trailer, the way the old man sat at the table with a nut cracker, breaking off bits of charcoal and nibbling on them as he watched old Martha, nodding approvingly, and accepting everything she was saying as a matter of fact. He recalled, too, how the old man, upon seeing them outside to their car, had patted Ed on the back and said, "My Martha is never wrong. Yessir, never is Martha wrong."

Jerry forced his thoughts to return to the present. He smiled at Ed and changed the topic of conversation. Before long, the subject was forgotten.

In the month of December, 1964, Ed was stricken with a heart attack, the first he had ever had in his life!

On the morning of January 6th, at exactly 4 A.M., 1965, one year to the date when Old Martha had made her veiled prediction, Ed Miller passed away in his sleep.

Jerry Banks, who had conferred with Ed Miller many times during the year following their visit to Martha, was convinced that his friend *believed* himself into a heart attack.

Had Ed, indeed, WILLED himself to die? Or had Old Martha really seen into the future?

As for Ed's widow, as far as anyone knows she is enjoying perfect health. . . .

LOST SISTERS LED TO MISSING FATHER BY "SPIRIT" OF MOTHER

WHEN TWO displaced persons find themselves lost in a city the size of New York, it can prove to be a terrible ordeal; but, when the refugees are fifteen-year-old twin sisters who cannot speak the English language and have lost the address of their only living relative, their father, it can be terrorizing.

Such was the experience of Helga and Ottile Müller when they arrived in the states from Nazi Germany after being liberated from a concentration camp. Despite the efforts of several refugee aid organizations, their father, Johann, could not be located.

After weeks of frustration and desolation, one morning the two girls fled from the home where they had been staying and went out on a desperate search of their own. They knew only one thing about their father, Johann. He had worked as a pastry chef before Hitler had risen to power and had somehow managed to flee to the United States after escaping from a prison bakery where he had been working. They remembered from their early childhood that their papa had made the best küchen (coffee cake) in all of Germany and his küchen tarts were something out of this world.

With nothing else to go on, they started out in search of the bakeries in New York, thinking that somewhere they were sure to recognize his handiwork and then find him.

But what the girls did not reckon with was the fact that there are virtually *hundreds* of bakeries in Manhattan alone.

After more than thirty hours of fruitless searching, they

dejectedly sat down in a park, huddling together, and trying to console each other.

As though something from beyond had suddenly begun to call their names, they began to look around them anxiously, with apprehension masking their red-rimmed eyes.

Helga looked at Ottile and Ottile looked at Helga. "Do you hear what *I* hear?" they chorused.

Wide-eyed in astonishment, neither would dare venture what each thought she heard. The thought was too incredible, too unbelievable.

Their mother had died shortly after they were thirteen, when the three of them had been taken to the concentration camp. They had been with her when she had drawn her last breath and had never really gotten over the dreadful impact of her death at that time.

"Come, we go now," Helga, the more level-headed of the two said. "We do not ask questions, we just go."

Ottile did not question where they were going. She too, heard the voice, *"Children, be brave and do not worry. I will take you to papa."* She bit her lip to keep from crying, for she was sure that she was listening to her mother's voice saying, "Come with me. We go now."

They descended from the street to a subway station. They went out on the platform and stood together, frightened as a roaring train thundered past without stopping. After a while a train stopped and both girls heard the voice say, "No, not this one. We wait for the next train."

Ten minutes later another train screeched to a stop. They nodded as if in obedience to the voice and hurried aboard. After a long while the voice again spoke, "We get off here, girls. Come."

They found sunlight beaming down on them as they ascended the stairs to the street. The sunshine was warm and comforting and it seemed to dissipate the weariness that had settled into their frail, undernourished bodies. When they emerged in the street they turned toward a business section, for the voice said, "To the next street we must go. Hurry along, girls, for I leave you now."

They stopped and took each other's hand, their cheeks flushing with excitement, their hearts pounding in anticipation.

As though of a single mind, they began to run. They reached the corner, crossed the street and found themselves in front of a bakery shop. Bursting with excitement, they

pointed at the pastries in the window and cried, "Papa's küchen! *See!*"

Breathlessly, they rushed into the store. An old woman behind the counter smiled at them and they blurted out in German, "Johann Müller works here, no?"

"Johann Müller works here, yes!"

Speechless, stunned, they gaped at her for a second and when the woman gestured toward the back of the store, they shrieked for joy and rushed toward the doorway.

The reunion was one the employees in that bakery will never forget.

More important, it was one Papa Müller and his two daughters would never forget.

The unexplainable mystery of their mother's voice leading them to their father in a teeming city of eight million souls may never be solved. All that counts is that Helga and Ottile found their father, a fact which might never have been a reality if their dead mother's voice had not come to them from beyond to show them the way.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MONTE CARLO CASINO

ON THE AFTERNOON of December 19, 1965, a tall, gaunt man in his early fifties entered the *Lucayan Beach Hotel's* plush *Monte Carlo Casino* on Grand Bahama Island. No one knew his name or where he had come from. In fact, after the amazing events of that Sunday afternoon and evening, no one was able to learn *how* he had arrived or later departed from the island.

Had he been among the throngs of people who had come and gone on one of the several cruise ships which were in port that day, or had he flown to Miami, 102 air miles away, or did he go to Nassau?

It was a mystery, and it was just as baffling as the uncanny run of luck he had enjoyed during the seven continuous hours in which he had sat at the roulette table. After beginning with only $100 in chips, he steadily won—without losing a single bet—$107,800.00!

In the fabulous casino, where fortunes are often won on the toss of the dice, the flip of a card, or the winning number at roulette, even the lucky winners lose at least a *few* of their bets. The proverbial Lady Luck usually shows her fickle nature to those upon whom she bestows her favor, even

when they win. But that Sunday in December, never once did the silent bettor in the unpressed blue suit and the frayed shirt lose a single wager!

This uncanny performance has never before been equalled in the legendary history of gambling anywhere in the world.

Among those who so incredulously watched the mystery man's quiet play were a group of professional gamblers. To a man, they agreed that the stranger exerted some "mysterious force, psychic power, or magic control" over the roulette wheel and the little ball that whirled around it.

Included among the crowd of awed observers was the famed personality "Dusty" Peters, a public relations man of international repute who stated: "I never believed that such a word as *impossible* exists where gambling is concerned. But what I saw happen that Sunday night *was* impossible!"

It was approximately two-thirty in the afternoon when the mystery man took a seat at the table. Before him, in two neat stacks were $100 in chips of $5.00 denominations.

After watching the play for several minutes, he reached forward and carefully placed a chip on the black.

The wheel was spun. The silver ball began its familiar whirring dance around and around. Finally, as the wheel's momentum decreased, the ball began to chatter. It started to bounce over the red and black numbers.

And then it stopped—on the black.

The man collected his winnings and bet again, that time on the red, increasing his bet slightly.

Again he won.

Then he placed a chip on number 14.

14 was the number that came up! The pay-off was 35 to 1.

An astonished gambler sitting beside the stranger nodded in disbelief as if to say, "You can't do it again."

But it *was* done again. This time the number was 28. It won.

It was done again.

And again.

And again.

Before long the man's stack of chips became a heap. The heap became a small mountain. People were beginning to conjecture about how much he had won so far.

Through it all the man sat solemnly, his eyes fixed on the wheel, his mind apparently concentrating on one thing: the little ball that went round and round, around the roulette wheel.

He was oblivious to the excitement coursing through the jam of people crowded around the table, watching the action. He did not seem the least bit excited. He did not crack a smile, nor did he smoke, or ask for a drink, or utter a sound, except to exchange an occasional necessary word with the croupier during all the time he sat there.

A few of the people at the table began to bet with the man. He did not seem to notice. He was oblivious to everyone, almost as though he were in another world. When he won, they won, too. And when they exclaimed in delight, he did not share in their joy or show his awareness of them in any way whatsoever.

Finally, after he had been playing steadily for three hours without a break, he put a hand up to his face. Pinching the high bridge of his nose between thumb and forefinger, he closed his eyes and settled back. The croupier asked if he wanted to place a bet, and for the first time that evening, he waved a hand as if to say he wanted to rest for a while.

Without stirring from his seat or opening his eyes for nearly an hour, he sat inert, as though in a trance.

At long last the hand fell away from his face. A stir of excitement was heard from the crowd watching and waiting. Again he began to bet, this time increasing his wagers to the house limits.

The hours fled, and suddenly it was time for the mystery man to cash in. Precisely at 9:25, after almost seven hours at the table without budging, he stood up.

A moan of disappointment went up from the watchers and players.

One of the cashier assistants hurried over and helped the man scoop his chips together in an enormous tray. "Would you like a cashier's cheque, sir?" he asked.

The man shook his head. "Cash, if you don't mind. I know how to take care of it."

After the chips had been counted at the cashier's window in the back of the casino, the mystery man stuffed three thick stacks of greenbacks into the pockets of his suit.

The total winnings, less his original investment, $107,800!

Just as he walked away from the table one man exclaimed, "Good Lord, man! Doesn't that excite you? If it was me, I'd be jumping right out of my skin."

But the mystery man was not like any of the people at the table. He was in fact, quite unlike anyone the casino operators and employees had ever before seen. And when

some of the onlookers tried to find the man after he left the cashier, the strangest event of the evening took place.

He was seen walking toward the crowd around the dice tables one moment and, as he merged with the crowd, he vanished!

"Where did he go?" one particularly anxious man asked. "One second he was there and the next thing I knew, he disappeared into thin air."

"That's odd," another man said, scratching his chin. "I watched him walk over to the craps table and I was just about to follow him when I didn't see him any more."

"This is terrible!" a woman exclaimed. "I wanted to talk to him for just a second to find out *how* he did it, and then he goes and pulls this vanishing act."

Several people standing around her laughed. One man asked, "Tell me, lady. Suppose *you* won all that money? Would you stand around telling the whole world how you did it?"

The curious onlookers will probably never know the secret of how the mystery man did it. He was seen the following day by a couple in Nassau who tried to engage him in conversation, but the silent stranger merely smiled and hurried to catch the 3:25 BOAC jet for London, taking his secret, and his fortune in cash, with him.

Was the shabbily dressed mystery man just a gambler with a fabulous "system" on a holiday, or was he actually psychic? And if he *was* able to mentally control the roulette wheel, how did he do it? Or did he merely look into the future and foretell which numbers were destined to win.

There are those in Grand Bahama who still talk about him, hoping that someday he may return. And if he does, perhaps he will be in a more expansive mood. Until that time, however, they visit the casino regularly, hopefully waiting and watching.

THE DEAD MAN RETURNED TO PREVENT A TRAGEDY

BUDDY WAS always a nervous, sensitive boy, answering his mother and father obediently and respectfully whenever they spoke to him. As he grew up, it became obvious that he was overly dependent and emotionally immature. However, his parents hopefully trusted that he would straighten himself out one day, and as is usually the case, nothing

constructive was done to help him, such as sending him to a psychiatrist.

When Buddy was twenty-seven, he married Ellen and settled down in an apartment not too far from his parents' home. He was outwardly happy, but his parents knew he was moody, inwardly disturbed, and lacked confidence in himself. Although he held down a job as a bookkeeper and seemed to be a devoted husband and, eventually, a good father, they were worried about him. For some instinctive reason, they felt that he was heading for a nervous breakdown—or worse.

And then it happened. A heart attack struck his father down. His mother, distraught over what had happened, was struck down by a speeding car when she ran out into the street while rushing to the hospital, and died a few hours after his father had died.

Buddy felt himself going to pieces. He tried to convey his deep grief to his wife, but she turned a deaf ear to him. She told him in no uncertain terms that she was sick and tired of being married to a boy and not a man. She walked out on him, and after that began to go out nightly, leaving him alone with the children, a boy and girl aged one and two.

Whenever Buddy asked his wife where or with whom she was going, she laughed in his face and sneered, "Wouldn't *you* like to know!"

Weeks passed and the situation grew worse. Finally, Buddy took it upon himself to follow his wife one evening. He bundled the children up and placed them in the back of his car and then drove after her, following as she boarded a bus and rode it toward the business section of the northern city in which they lived.

He watched as she got off the bus and entered a cocktail lounge. He saw her leave a few minutes later with a man. Buddy followed them as they drove to a motel, where the man went in and rented a room while Ellen remained seated in the car. A few minutes later he watched the man emerge from the motel office, collect Ellen, and go toward one of the rooms. At the sight of his wife entering the motel room with another man, Buddy burst into tears.

He would have given anything to have been able to burst in on them, seize his wife, and drag her back to their car forcibly. But he was a timid man. Brutality and violence were not part of his nature. Instead, he cried uncontrollably.

Then and there he decided to kill himself.

With his sight blurred by tears, Buddy drove aimlessly through the city. He began to head towards his home, erratically steering the car up one street and down the next. Finally, he found himself in the park which overlooked his neighborhood. He drove to the edge of an overlook called "Lover's Leap," stopped the car, and got out. He looked down and screamed at the top of his lungs. "Father!" he shouted into the lonely night, "Help me! What am I to do?"

But no answer came, no voice of encouragement, no sound of advice. He began to shake violently and his teeth chattered. He was convinced then that there was nothing else to do but take his life, for there was nothing left to live for.

He returned to the car, sitting in the back with the children and looking down at them, sleeping peacefully on the pallet of blankets he had fixed for them on the floorboards. This was the end, he told himself. "I have nothing to live for now and I might as well kill myself. The children too. They'll be better off dead than having a mother like they've got—a no good tramp."

Buddy's emotional state had completely distorted his reasoning. His ego was completely destroyed by the sight of his wife entering the motel with another man.

He leaned forward and turned the key in the dash, starting the engine. He had to stretch over the back of the front seat in order to release the handbrake. Then he turned the car's steering wheel so the vehicle would begin to roll toward the edge of road and the dangerous precipice that loomed beyond. With the hysterical sobs racking his body in great convulsive shudders, Buddy nudged the gear into first and collapsed in the rear seat, weeping hysterically, feeling the car's idling engine begin to set it into motion with the gear engaged.

The panic that had overtaken him multiplied.

Frozen in a paroxysm of despair, Buddy was unable to comprehend what was happening. His teeth clenched, his hands and face locked in a spasm of muscular reaction that paralyzed him, he awaited death.

But death was not to come.

He was vaguely aware of the car turning and the engine speed increasing as if someone had taken over the controls. He felt strangely assuaged and an overwhelming feeling of peace came over him.

Was this death? he asked himself. Is this what it feels like to be dead? he wondered. And yet, he dared not look. He

had the feeling of motion, of streets passing beneath the wheels of the vehicle.

Then the engine stopped; the car ceased to move.

Someone opened the door and he stared at the man in a daze. The stranger at the door was dressed in white . . .

Another man ran over to the car. They took Buddy out and half-carried, half-walked him into a doorway.

That was all he was able to recall. The next thing he knew he was in a hospital bed. Bars were on the windows.

Nearly eight months later he was released from the state mental hospital.

He learned from several people who had seen and recognized his car that there was a driver in the front seat, a man who looked exactly like his father!

The nurse at the admitting desk stated that later that night a heavy-set man came in and said that the new patient had just tried to take his own life as the result of a terrible emotional shock. Asked if he was related to the patient, the man replied: "Yes, I am his father."

But before the nurse could question him further, he vanished.

Today, Buddy is happily remarried and lives in a small town not too distant from his old hometown with his new wife and two children. He has been able to make a satisfactory adjustment to life and is thankful for the miracle that saved his children's lives and his own on that night of madness.

Whether or not the mysterious Samaritan was really the spirit of his deceased father, or whether it was some passer-by who had witnessed what he was about to do, Buddy will never know.

However, he *prefers* to believe that it was the spirit of his dead father returned to save him—and to do what should have been done years before—commit him to the care of psychiatrists.

RAPPINGS FROM THE PAST

NOT TOO FAR from Boston is a house that was built in 1769. It is a quaint house with a *history*, as the present owners-occupants will attest. But the history to which they refer has no basis as historical fact. Unless of course, the fact deals with the chronicles of *poltergeists* (spirits who are

purportedly responsible for rappings and other unexplainable noises or phenomenon) who have "haunted" houses.

Shortly after the end of World War I, a family bought the old house from an estate which had permitted it to fall into a sad state of disrepair. The new owners restored the house and modernized it, adding plumbing facilities and electricity. Then, when it was completely refurbished, they moved in, lived there less than a week and moved out. The old house returned to weeds and remained boarded up, termed the "spooky old house" and widely avoided by the neighboring residents, child and adult alike.

The house remained deserted until the early 1930s when the present owners acquired it at a county auction where real property was being sold for delinquent taxes. The new owners fixed the house up, painted it from top to bottom and moved in.

Then strange things began happening.

Precisely at 11:59 each evening the sound of rapping could be heard, coming from the direction of the attic. Upon investigation, no source could be found. As the husband, wife, and three young sons crept through the attic with flashlights guiding them, the rapping continued. It seemed to elude them, no matter where they went.

The police were called after a few days and the officers investigating the complaint scratched their heads, unable to fathom the mystery. Before long, the poeple in the neighborhood began to poke fun at the children in the family who, in self-defense, began to deny the existence of the weird noises.

As the years rolled by the family grew accustomed to the strange rappings, never mentioning them except to those trusted friends they knew would keep the secret.

But one family friend, a minister, was more than just a little intrigued. He offered to make a try at learning the source of the rappings and putting an end to them once and for all time.

He promptly moved into the attic, where he was to sleep for several days while watching sensitive meters and other devices which he had borrowed from a scientist friend. Recordings were made of the sounds and he called in several professors from a nearby university to assist him. Even so, no logical explanation for the rappings could be found.

Completely baffled, the minister and his friends gave up.

Then something new was tried. The minister, who had always prided himself on being a chronicler of the times,

both past and present, and who was interested in genealogy (the science that traces family names and family trees) decided to trace the history of the house beginning with the time it was built in 1769.

He learned that a former owner had been found strangled to death in the attic in 1833. The murderer was never caught. Then, in an old diary which had belonged to a former resident of the community who died during the Civil War, he found an old clipping which had been taken from a newspaper of the times. The clipping mentioned the "haunted house" which the "ghost" of the murdered man still occupied, who kept banging on the ceiling beams as he did when he was strangled to death.

With this clue to go on, the minister again found himself at an impasse. If it actually was the spirit of the dead man, was it possible to communicate with him and beg him to stop his infernal rappings?

There was only one thing to do: get in touch with a well-known medium who had a reputation for "contacting" the other world, and see if he could get her to help bring the rappings to an end by holding a seance in the house.

Everyone agreed. They had tried everything else, so why not a seance?

On the evening of the seance, everyone was seated in a circle in the attic, their hands joined to those of the medium's. At 11:30 P.M. the rappings began.

The medium closed her eyes and went into a trance. Her features were cast into the shadows by the light of the single candle. There were six people participating, including the minister and the medium, and all hands were joined so there was no chance that the medium or anyone else could resort to trickery of any sort.

"If you hear me," the medium said after a long time, "stop rapping, then rap three times."

Holding their breath, everyone strained to listen.

Suddenly, the rapping which had been constant, stopped. After a short pause there were three raps.

"Are you the spirit of the man who was murdered in this attic?" the medium asked in a strangely hollow-sounding tone. "If you are, rap three times for yes."

The reply was three loud raps.

"Have you been rapping because you wanted the world to know you had been murdered, is that it?"

Three raps answered.

"Is there something any of us in this room can do?"

Again three raps were heard.

"Has it something to do with this room we are now in? If not, rap two times. Two times for no, three times for yes."

The reply was three rapid taps.

"You want someone in this room to find something in this room, is that it?"

The answer was again three raps.

Then, after a few moment's silence, the rappings began all over again, frantic and excited, as if the spirit was still trying to say something.

Further attempts at contact proved fruitless. The medium broke her clasp on the hands of those sitting to the right and left of her, and the lights were turned on. Amid the loud rapping everyone at once began searching the attic. Although it had been searched thoroughly during the years past, it had never before undergone such a complete search as was then conducted.

Suddenly, the minister cried out, "Look, I've found something here between the rafters!"

As soon as he announced his find, the rapping stopped!

Hushed, everyone turned to see what the minister had found.

It was a bible. In it was the last will and testament of the murdered man, the man who had died more than a hundred years before, in 1833. As his dying wish, he left all his belongings to a local church (not the minister's.) The church was still in existence, and bank accounts, which the man had had in his own name, were still lodged in a local bank which, unfortunately, had failed during the great depression, but which had since been reorganized and the depositors paid off in installments.

The sum that was settled on the church was modest, but the family, which still occupies the old house, owes a debt of gratitude to the minister who helped bring about an end to the mystery of the rappings from beyond.

Since that day, the rappings have never been heard again.

The poltergeist had found peace of mind at last.

BIRTHRIGHT ESTABLISHED BY VISITATION

THE SUNLIGHT STREAMING into the hospital that cold morning in February, 1958 did little to warm the heart of the twenty-year-old patient, for standing at her bedside was her family lawyer and a man she hated—her paternal uncle.

The girl was recovering from a tragic accident in which both of her parents had been killed. Her only living relative, the uncle standing beside the bed, had been appointed her guardian and the executor of her estate until she reached the legal age of twenty-one, just eleven short months away.

But to the girl and her attorney, those months were anything but short, they both knew that her dead father's ne'er-do-well brother would find more than one way to get his greedy hands on what would be left of the girl's estate. After the hospital bills and doctors' fees had been paid, there would be little enough remaining for her to finish her college education, provided *he* wasn't given the opportunity to pilfer what was left.

The family attorney had come to the hospital to take the young girl home. But he hadn't considered the difficult time he would have when he promised her that he would help. He was to find that out on the day she was to leave. The girl had burst into tears and cried, "I'm not going. That man is *not* going to live in the same house with me, court order or no court order!"

Finally, she was persuaded to leave the hospital, but only after she insisted that her uncle was not to ride in the same car with them.

When she was settled in her own room in the home which she had shared with her parents before the tragic accident, nearly eight weeks earlier, she became nearly hysterical, and begged the lawyer to stay.

Not knowing what else to do, he phoned the doctor who had treated the girl and explained the circumstances. The physician said he would come right over.

The two men decided the best thing to do would be to call in the judge who had issued the order and the three of them could then attempt to reason with her. They were convinced that the girl had over-exaggerated the degree to which her parents had disliked and avoided the uncle who was now her guardian, and they felt that something might be accomplished by such an informal gathering.

After the judge consented to meet with them, they put the girl in a wheel chair and rolled her into her mother's upstairs sitting room, a pleasant room that overlooked a garden and terrace beyond.

The judge, a kindly man who obviously felt quite upset because the girl was so distressed, spoke first, telling her he had investigated her uncle's background and had found it to be unimpeachable. He went on to explain how the court

was powerless to do anything else unless a will or legal document of some sort were found, giving other instructions.

An earlier search of the deceased parents' effects had proved fruitless. No will had been found, therefore the estate was probated before the court on the premise that the parents had died intestate.

"But what's to stop my uncle from selling everything out from under me while he's my guardian—while I'm confined to this wheel chair and can't do anything to stop him?"

The judge hesitated, then said, "I'm afraid there isn't anything else that can be done, my dear. I must rule according to the law. Until you are twenty-one, your uncle has full jurisdiction over the administration of the estate. At that time you can then do whatever you wish—"

"It's not right!" the girl cried. "It isn't right to let *him* get his filthy hands on everything my daddy and mother worked their hearts out for—and after all these years, why does he have to show up now?"

The discussion continued until dark when the judge, the physician and the attorney finally decided it was pointless to go on.

As they turned to leave, the girl screamed, "No! Don't leave me like this. Surely, there must be something you can do, some law, *something*?"

Three grave faces looked back at her.

Suddenly, as though they had been just ordered to halt at gun-point, they stood rooted to the floor, their eyes fixed incredulously at a figure that just seemed to materialize out of the gloom beyond the soft light of the boudoir lamp.

The girl choked back a scream. "*Mother!* It can't be!"

The apparition seemed to float toward a writing desk. She was almost formless, a glowing luminescence that held them spellbound in disbelief. Then the girl cried, "She's trying to tell us something!"

The spectre pointed to a desk drawer and dissolved into nothingness.

For several long moments afterward the three men were unable to speak. "If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes—" the grey-haired judge finally whispered, as the attorney suddenly sprang to life and hurried over to the desk.

The drawer was opened and searched thoroughly, but nothing was found. Then the doctor suggested that they take all the drawers out. When the second drawer was removed, they found, taped to the bottom, a long white envelope.

Inside was the missing will. And with it was a note that

specifically stated that under no circumstances was the uncle to be permitted to meddle in the affairs of the estate in the event of the girl's parents' deaths. It named an executor and another relative to look after the girl.

When the document was read, the judge hastily rescinded his earlier court order. The uncle was ordered to leave and forbidden to return. The reasons given for this were confidential, and it was also stipulated that the uncle was only to receive three dollars in dimes as his inheritance.

Was the apparition which was seen by three sane, learned men a manifestation of the dead mother from the spirit world, or had they merely imagined it?

And what of the thirty pieces of silver which were left to the uncle?

The answer may never be known; however, what matters most is that an orphaned girl's estate was preserved for her as her parents had wanted it to be.

CURSE OF THE VOODOO QUEEN

HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN the depths of the Louisiana bayous, voodoo drums beat to this day, carrying out the wishes of *Mamaloi Féy,* a voodoo Queen who reigned supreme, until one day in 1924 when she predicted her own death!

"On the day that I will die, and on the anniversary of that day from then on, the drums shall carry forth this message: Death to my enemies, the children of my enemies, and the children's children of my enemies. So be it."

The *mamaloi* (witch doctor, female gender) was known for her black magic and sorcery. Along with this fame among the voodoo people of the swamps was also hatred and fear. For the three years of her reign she had inflicted upon her followers unbelievable restrictions that had subjected them to virtual slavery. They hated her for this, but no one was brave enough to do anything about it. So, they obeyed her every wish, even to the participation in the forbidden *Damballa* rites of the human sacrifice!

It is said that Mamaloi Féy in her youth had been deeply in love with a dashing Frenchman from New Orleans. But then one day he jilted her.

The next day she began to practice the secret voodoo rites she had learned from her mother and her mother's mother before her.

On the third day, the errant lover was stricken with a mysterious fever. He lapsed into a coma and remained unconscious for two months, before he died during a screaming fit of terror that awakened everyone in the hospital where he had been confined while doctors tried to fathom the mystery of his ailment.

But everyone in the area *knew* why the Frenchman had died. THEY knew what caused his death, but they weren't saying.

Mamaloi Féy's black magic was the most lethal they had ever seen, for she had openly stated to her followers that her errant lover was to die screaming from the tortures of a thousand demons who would kill him after he lay deep in sleep for sixty days and sixty nights. Never before had they witnessed such a powerful hex and then watched its enactment over so long a period.

As a result, Féy became the undisputed *mamaloi* of the isolated community on the edge of the bayous in southern Louisiana.

During the first few months of her reign, after the Frenchman's death, Féy began to exert more and more power over the believers of voodoo in the area. Soon she controlled subjects who had been under the domination of other witch doctors (*papalois*) and this was resented.

Consequently, a number of the dissenters banded together and a secret meeting was held. Those who feared the voodoo woman, Féy, were against doing anything drastic. However, the others were all for it. Five men were left under the leadership of Papaloi Masòn who assured them that *his* "magic" would protect them from Féy's voodoo hexes, if they would help him kill her.

Plans were made and everything was in readiness to strike her down and stab her to death.

Then word came to the conspirators that Féy had predicted her own death.

As this news reached the men they panicked, but their leader, Masòn, threatened them with a fate worse than death if they went back on their word after vowing that they would see the thing through.

Caught between two evils, the men were unable to decide what to do. But soon their minds were made up; they would go along with Masòn. They reached their decision when two of the men tried to flee by escaping into the steamy bayous, hoping to cross the swamp country and reach the safety of another community. They never made it.

Their bodies were returned to their village in a mysterious fashion, floating downstream upon the brackish water while propped upright in a Cajun canoe, their sightless eyes and bloated faces staring at the three men remaining in the plot as if bearing mute testimony to their fate too, if they were to defy the papaloi.

Two days later the deed was done. Féy was stabbed to death in her sleep.

Papaloi Masòn officiated at the hapless voodoo woman's funeral deep in the bayous. He then announced that he had been "ordained" by Mamaloi Féy to take over the ceremonial duties and to rule in her stead.

Exactly thirty days later, Papaloi Masòn's time had run out. Féy's curse went into effect. He died, writhing and screaming on the ground while the others formed a circle and watched.

The three remaining men in the conspiracy each died in the same fashion, one after another, on the anniversary of the voodoo woman's murder.

And since that time, every living relative of the six men who had plotted to murder Féy, died at regular intervals until finally there were no known survivors.

When the last descendant of the murderers had died in a screaming fit of convulsions, Mamaloi Féy was seen to walk again in the ghostly depths of the forbidding swampland. A few of her disciples or "visionaries" still continue to predict the things Féy supposedly relates to them and through their awesome practices, the dead hand of Mamaloi Féy still commands the voodoo people in that sector.

Despite efforts by the authorities to ban the practice of voodoo, the rites are still religiously held, deep in the mysterious wilds of the Louisiana bayous.

Legend, fact, or fiction? The truth is that the curse of the voodoo woman still prevails among the hapless people of the bayous who permit themselves to this very day to be controlled by the "spirit" of the murdered voodoo queen, Mamaloi Féy. And they will go on living in fear as long as she continues to be seen, walking through the shadows, on the anniversary of her death.

Those who are unlucky enough to cross her path on the nights when she walks, live in fear and terror of Mamaloi Féy's wrath.

THE "LUCKY" DREAM OF BERTHA BROWN

In old Baltimore, not too far from the city's Old Town market, lived Bertha Brown and her son, Willie. Bertha had always been a religious woman and she had raised her son, Willie, to believe, as she did, that they had been destined to do something great in life before they passed on.

But, as luck would have it, Bertha and Willie could never seem to get ahead. While Willie worked as a truck driver, his mother worked from dawn until sundown in the Old Town market, tending a vegetable stall, and cheerfully greeting her regular customers with a word of hope, saying, "One of these days, the Almighty is going to say, *Bertha Brown, the time has come when you and your Willie are to begin work for the Lord.*"

"And what kind of work will you be doing for *Him*?" she was regularly asked, more in humor than in malice.

"I'm going to start a little church school for the underprivileged folks," she always answered.

"That takes a whole lot of money. More than you'll ever make on this job, and more than you'll ever hope to make."

To this, Bertha always smiled and said, "The good Lord will provide. One of these days, old Bertha's gonna get lucky. And 'til that day comes, I'm hoping and praying and going to church every Sunday."

Then one day it happened.

Bertha Brown awoke at the crack of dawn and excitedly called her son. "Willie! I had my lucky dream. I had it, I just know it has come!"

The day? The 1st day of September, 1947.

The dream? That a crepe of mourning would hang on a neighbor's door—the house number was 947.

As they ate their simple breakfast, Bertha continued to prate on about how she was certain the dream had indicated that the "number" would turn up for that day.

"But, mama," Willie protested. "You never in your whole life gambled or played the numbers. Why now? Why do you believe that the good Lord is going to help us by letting you hit a number?"

"Because it's the only way poor folks like us can hope to strike it rich. And because we aren't going to use the money for ourselves. We'll use it to do good. We'll move away out

there in the country where they need that little church school, and we'll—"

Suddenly, Willie glanced up at the calendar and then cried out, "Hey, maybe that is the number for today. Look, today's the first day of the 9th month in the year 1947. 947. How about that?"

"That's what I've been trying to tell you, Willie. That's the number for today, sure enough!"

As they left the house together to go their separate ways to work, Bertha suddenly clutched Willie's sleeve and stopped him as her hand lifted to point down the street. "Willie? Am I still dreaming or do you see what I see?"

Frowning, he looked at her. "Now what'd you ask that for?"

"I told you I dreamed I saw a crepe on the door of 947. And look, there's Old Joshua, the undertaker. And he's hanging a crepe on that door."

Willie swallowed hard and drew back a step in awe. "W-who died?"

"Must be the old woman who lived on the second floor. I heard she was ailing, but then I heard that she was getting around again. Maybe she had another stroke, the poor thing, God rest her in peace."

Needless to say, Bertha and Willie verified what had happened. And that clinched it. Neither Bertha nor her son, Willie went to work that day. They were too busy drawing every cent of their savings out of the bank, pawning everything they owned, and borrowing as much as they could get in order to bet on the number she had dreamed.

The odds against hitting the number were 1,000 to 1. The pay-off was $700 for every dollar bet.

But this did not deter Bertha. She was as convinced as one could be that the number she had dreamed was due to hit. And she backed it up with more than $500 in hard cash.

At the time, the number was arrived at in Baltimore by totalling the total mutuels of the first three races at a nearby race track and looking to the left of the decimal for each race for the first, second and third number. The Baltimore *News-Post* at the time unwittingly carried the number on the front page of the early evening paper, the 10-Star edition.

Bertha and Willie were standing in front of the newspaper office on Pratt Street, waiting for the news.

With trembling hands they grabbed the paper as soon as it was out. 947 hit!

And Bertha and her son Willie were rich.

After their debts had been settled, and after they had bought a few things for themselves, Bertha Brown and her son, Willie, got into a new car they had just purchased and drove south. They went home to the small town in South Carolina where Bertha had been born and established their little church school for the underprivileged.

As far as anyone knows, Bertha never made another bet again.

And neither has her son, Willie, who assists in the church work. Besides, they are both too busy for such nonsense as gambling. It is far better to give than to receive, Bertha continues to preach, and she demonstrates that she means it every day.

Thanks to Bertha Brown's lucky dream, a small and very poor South Carolina community is richer in more ways than one.

THE REPAIRMAN WAS A PHANTOM

GERTRUDE OLIVER WAS a retired school teacher who lived alone in an apartment in a small New Jersey oceanside community. For years she had enjoyed her solitude, which she cherished almost to obsession. A loner all her life, Gertrude did not welcome intruders upon her privacy, except perhaps for only one person in the world, a woman who had been her lifelong friend.

Dorothea, who lived not too far from Gertrude, occasionally dropped in on a weekend to stay over with her.

On a bleak, freezing Friday night in December, 1951, when the gas heater was not quite enough, Dorothea and Gertrude sat shivering in the living room, watching television. Finally Gertrude was unable any longer to stand the cold. She retired, leaving Dorothea alone in the living room, huddled in front of the gas heater trying to keep warm while she watched the late movie.

After the show was over, Dorothea sleepily turned off the television set and the heater, and retired to the guest room. Soon she was fast asleep.

But Dorothea had *not* turned off the heater. Inadvertently, she had turned the gas on after turning off the flames, and the lethal fumes soon began to permeate the tiny apartment.

At two A.M. the doorbell started ringing, but since both women were in a stupor as a consequence of the gas fumes, neither one was wakened.

The ringing of the doorbell continued and then someone began to pound heavily on the front door.

Several of the tenants in the building were roused. They went to their front doors and peered down the corridor. They saw, standing in front of Gertrude Oliver's door, a repairman in the familiar blue uniform of the gas company. He had a tool kit in his hands and they clearly saw the unmistakable emblem of the gas company on his shirt and on his cap.

Finally, Gertrude managed to wake and come groggily to the door. She peered out through a crack in the door, which was secured by a safety chain, and asked, "What do you want at this ungodly hour?"

"I'm from the gas company, lady," the man was heard to say. "We had a report of a gas leak coming from your apartment and—"

It was unnecessary for him to say anymore. Gertrude hastily opened the door and admitted him. He went immediately to the gas heater and turned off the jets. Without uttering a word, he left.

Gertrude threw open the windows and roused Dorothea. The sickly sweet smell in the apartment told them plainly that the repairman had saved their lives.

Early the next morning Gertrude called up the gas company to thank them for having sent the repairman. She asked for his name, because she wanted to bake him a cake by way of expressing her gratitude.

After a check of the gas company records, the supervisor called her back and said, "I'm sorry, Miss Oliver, but you must be mistaken. No one from our office was in your neighborhood last night. In fact, every available serviceman on duty last night was on an emergency job, repairing a broken gas main at the other end of town."

The women were astonished. Someone *was* there. They had seen the repairman, or at least Gertrude had, and furthermore she had let him in to check the gas jets. She was positive she hadn't dreamed it. Determined to get to the bottom of the mystery, they questioned the other tenants in the building.

Yes, they had heard and seen the gas company man at Miss Oliver's door. They described the man, and his description fitted exactly that of the man Gertrude had let into the apartment.

Believing that the company had some mysterious reason for keeping them from seeing the repairman to whom they

owed their thanks, the two women baked a cake anyway and were waiting at the service department time-keeper's office for the men to come on duty for the night shift.

However, after stopping each of the twelve men who comprised the entire work force, all of whom had been on duty the previous night, they were forced to admit that he was not among them. Gertrude and Dorothea were dumbfounded. If none of these men had been the mysterious caller, who was he and where was he from? And why? Who had sent for him? How had he known of the near tragedy?

Piqued by the two elderly women's insistence that someone from the company had saved their lives the night before, the night foreman showed them into his office and questioned them. He too was unable to provide an answer. Then the phone rang. While he was engaged in conversation Gertrude stood up to look at a group picture of the firm's employees which was hanging on the wall. Suddenly, she cried out and pointed, "Look! That's *him*, that's the man who came to the house last night. I'd recognize him anywhere."

The foreman hung up and arose. He came over to the photograph and blinked in surprise at the man Gertrude was pointing to.

"Why, that's impossible, Miss," he said. "The man you're pointing at died ten years ago."

The mystery of the phantom repairman has never been solved. Even though Gertrude and Dorothea had shown copies of the picture of the repairman to the others who had seen him, and had got verification that the dead man had been the one they saw and positively recognized, nothing was proved.

Except for one strange thing.

The cake that the two women had baked by way of showing their appreciation to the man who had saved their lives mysteriously disappeared, box and all, from Gertrude's kitchen table later that evening!

TV TRANSMISSION FROM THE PAST

TRACY AND his wife, Nita, were a typical young married couple with a dream. The dream? To own their own home someday.

But "someday" never seemed to come, for no matter how

hard they worked, no matter how much they tried to save, they just could not seem to get together the two thousand dollars they needed for the downpayment on their dreamhouse and for the furniture and appliances required to furnish it.

About all they had was a handful of meager possessions—a bedroom set, a second-hand kitchen set, and a hand-me-down television set which they had inherited from an aunt, and which always seemed to be in need of costly repairs.

At twenty-four years of age, the young married couple had everything to be thankful for, despite an accident which had left Tracy partially handicapped and in need of expensive therapy treatments. However, his future with an insurance company was promising, and Nita's part-time typist job enabled them to earn enough collectively to make ends meet. But there wasn't enough left over for the house down-payment fund.

May 5, 1960 was one of those days when everything seemed to go wrong. Tracy learned that he would have to undergo an operation, and as a result would be away from work for weeks without full salary. And, Nita learned she was expecting!

It was this latter bit of news that elevated their spirits, however, and they were so excited that when bedtime came around, they couldn't sleep. They sat up in the living room, with Nita snuggled against Tracy in their big lounge chair, watching the late show.

Just as the western they had been watching was getting interesting, a thunderstorm that had been threatening all evening suddenly unleashed its fury.

And then the lights went out.

They both frowned at the TV set, annoyed because the power had failed at so crucial a time.

At that moment an incredible thing happened. Although the street lights and all of the house lights in the neighborhood had gone out, there still seemed to be electricity feeding into the video set. While the picture tube faded and brightened erratically, the channel tuner could be heard turning, as though the set had suddenly gone haywire and was changing stations at random.

"Isn't that the craziest thing?" Nita laughed. "Here we are in the dark, with every darn light in the house off, and the TV set is still on."

"Probably some freak electric charge is still operating in

the transformer or something," Tracy surmised, kissing his wife affectionately.

"What station is that?" she asked him in a curious tone.

He returned his attention to the video screen. A drama seemed to be enfolding. Three soldiers in Civil War uniforms were chasing a man along the banks of a river, firing their ancient rifles in a desperate attempt to stop him.

Tracy became absorbed in the program, watching it with keen interest. "The way that man is running with those saddlebags you'd think he had a million dollars stashed away there."

"I wonder what he has that those soldiers want so badly?" Nita commented without shifting her gaze from the television set.

Suddenly, Tracy stiffened and moved up in the chair, pushing his wife to one side in order to see the screen better, because something had just caught his attention. "Well I'll be doggoned," he muttered. "Don't you recognize that place, honey?"

"It can't be!" she exclaimed. "It isn't that waterfall in the woods near the summer place we used to visit, is it?"

"It certainly is!" he cried. "Look, there's that goofy rock formation you used to say reminded you of a Hawaiian Tiki God."

"Yes, yes, it is. But I didn't know they made a movie around there. Gosh, isn't that something?"

As they spoke, they watched the fleeing man hide behind a clump of shrubbery as the soldiers hurried right by without seeing him. As soon as they had gone out of sight, the man stood up, and looking around furtively, as though searching for a place in which to conceal the saddlebags, he abruptly began to run toward the waterfall which could be seen and heard in the immediate background.

Just as he reached the waterfall, he caught a glimpse of the soldiers returning. Trapped out in the open with no place left to run, he backed into the waterfall, and slipped.

"Oh, no!" Nita cried.

Tracy laughed and chided her. She always got carried away whenever they watched a particularly realistic drama. And this show had a powerful quality of realism to it that held them both spellbound with suspense.

The camera seemed to pan toward the fugitive who was gasping for breath as he hid beneath the torrential downrushing of the waterfall. Then the soldiers appeared to be advancing toward him, closing in, their rifles at the ready.

Nita pressed her knuckles to her mouth. She gasped in frightened sympathy for the cornered man.

All of a sudden the man dislodged several rocks with his clutching hands as he attempted to flatten himself against the slimy wet rocks behind the cascade. He then seemed to have an idea. Still hidden from the soldiers, he turned to face the rocks and as he did so, his desperate hands pried back a large, flat rock. With almost a superhuman effort he strained to budge it. Both Nita and Tracy, on the edge of the chair by then, watched in fascination as they unconsciously pulled for the man to succeed.

Finally, he did it. The huge stone moved out far enough for him to shove the bulky saddlebags into the crevice. He then hurled his entire weight against the stone and pushed it back into place.

"Whew!" Nita sighed. "For a second there I thought he wasn't going to make it."

"It's only a picture, sweetie. Don't let it get you so upset. With your condition you shouldn't get excited. It isn't—"

Nita turned on him and made a face. "Listen to *you*," she laughed. "Are you going to be one of *those* expectant fathers?"

"What do you mean, one of *those*?"

She kissed him on the tip of his chin. "You know what I mean. But, *shh*, we're missing the show."

They returned their attention to the screen just as the fugitive made a break for it. The soldiers zeroed-in on him and fired. The man crumpled and fell into the river.

As the soldiers started into the stream the wounded man rolled over in the water and drew a revolver, scrabbling to reach the protection of a large boulder, and firing as he moved.

In a few seconds the three pursuers fell, mortally wounded, but also killing the man they had been chasing.

At that moment the lights in the house went on as the electric power was restored. The television program that had been in progress at the time of the interruption, resumed.

Nita and Tracy looked at each other in amazement, with disappointment on their faces. "Just when I was getting interested, they had to go and start playing this old western again," he said in annoyance.

Nita laughed. "Why don't you call the station and complain. Maybe they'll start playing the other movie again."

Tracy laughed. "Are you daring me to do that?"

"Yes," she said, kissing him. "I dare you."

Tracy got up, crossed the room to the phone and called the television broadcasting station.

Two minutes later he hung up, gaping at his wife as though he couldn't believe what he had just heard. "They said that they had been off the air until a minute ago; that they were also without power and that they had *not* been broadcasting anything at all, let alone what I said we saw!"

"You mean to tell me that we didn't just see a movie on the television set? If not, please tell me what it was that we were watching?"

Neither Nita or Tracy could realize that what they had just witnessed was of no plausible, known origin. Moreover, as they talked about it into the wee hours, they gradually began to realize that something was uncanny about the whole thing.

The next morning Tracy called the television repair shop where they had so frequently had their set serviced and told the repairman what they had seen. The man laughed and said it was impossible for them to have seen a broadcast since the power was off all over the city and the set couldn't have worked. Of course, he suggested, they may have picked up a freak image broadcast by some other station in another area, but again, it couldn't have been seen if the electricity was off.

Tracy hung up and took Nita by the hand. "Come on, sweetie. We're going ghost-hunting."

"Are you daffy?" she asked. "You think we actually saw some kind of a—?" She broke off as the realization dawned on her that perhaps what they had seen *was* something unearthly. "Yes," she finally answered her own question. "You do think that. Okay, I'm game. Let's go!"

An hour and a half later, the young couple, barefoot, were standing at the edge of the familiar waterfall. "You're not thinking of actually going in there to—?"

He nodded determinedly. A moment later, he took a deep breath and stepped into the waterfall.

Nita watched apprehensively, barely able to see him as he felt along the rocks and located the big one which the man in the picture had moved. When she saw he couldn't budge it, Nita climbed down to the river bank, found a tree limb which could be used as a lever and returned with it.

"Good girl!" he shouted, grabbing it and putting it to the task immediately.

Several moments later the huge stone fell away. Tracy

jumped aside as it rolled and tumbled into the water beyond. He then reached inside the crevice, felt around and leapt back, dragging out a large, mold-encrusted object—the saddlebags.

Nita gasped when he emerged from the waterfall holding it in his hands. Together, they climbed down to the dry bank where they had left their shoes and eagerly began to open the flaps.

When they saw what was inside, Nita blinked in disbelief.

"I don't believe it. Pinch me and tell me I'm dreaming."

"I've got goose-bumps on my goose-bumps," he said hurriedly standing up and glancing around. Cautiously, Nita looked around also. "Do you think somebody else saw the TV transmission too?"

Suddenly he grabbed the pouches in one hand and taking her hand in his other, began to pull her. "Let's get out of here."

They ran wildly, as though pursued by demons. When they reached their car, they jumped inside, hastily locking the doors after them, and sped away.

When they had reached the city, they were unable any longer to contain their curiosity. They parked in the wide open spaces of a parking lot near a shopping center and peeked inside the ancient leather pouches.

One side had been filled with what had once been obviously a fortune in greenbacks, but the dampness and a century of resting between the wet rocks had completely ruined them.

However on the other side of the pouch they found a dozen mold-encrusted oil-cloth sacs, stiff from age and time, but intact. While furtively glancing around them to make certain they were unobserved, Tracy tested the weight of one of the pouches and wondered aloud what was inside.

"It sure feels heavy."

"Well, don't just sit there weighing it in your hand. Open it. I'm dying of curiosity!"

His trembling fingers fumbled with the wrapping. Finally he managed to get it open. They both gasped in excitement.

"*Gold!*" Tracy whispered. "It's real, genuine, gold coins, Nita. Can you beat that? Must be a fortune here. There's no telling what price these will bring at the coin dealer's. And look, they're all pre-Civil War dates. We struck it rich, Nita. We struck it rich!"

Suddenly Nita burst into laughter. She laughed until the tears streamed from her eyes.

"Now what's so funny?"

"You, silly. You're soaking wet and neither of us paid any attention to that until now."

"So who cares?" he grinned, starting the car. "Let's go home and count."

And count they did. Tracy and Nita had indeed struck it rich. The coins they had found were sold to a dealer for nearly four thousand dollars, more than enough for them to put the down payment on the dream house they had always wanted; and, there was enough left over to buy furniture, to pay for Tracy's operation, and to pay the maternity expenses when Nita had her baby.

What *was* the strange drama they had seen unfold on their inoperative television set that evening of the blackout? Who were the actors in the scene they had witnessed, and to whom did the money originally belong? Through some strange and entirely implausible accident of nature—or deliberate action of something unearthly—Nita and Tracy found their pot of gold. But what strange and mysterious power had been the force that had guided them in the right direction?

Perhaps someday the answer may be known. Until then, Tracy and Nita have stopped talking about it. Why? No plausible answer.

THE BOY IN THE FIREHOUSE

LITTLE VERNON WASHINGTON used to be a familiar figure around the firehouse in the large eastern city where he lived. He was seen there frequently, at least twice a week, because he was a little boy of eight and like all other little fellows of that age, he liked to look at the shiny fire engines and talk with the friendly fire fighters. But Vernon had still another reason for returning so often to the firehouse.

He helped support himself by what he earned shining shoes.

While it is true that a lad of eight is somewhat tender in years to be out on his own earning a living as a bootblack, Vernon was tough in a special sort of way. He had known hunger and privation and growing up in the teeming overcrowded slums, and all this had made him worldly-wise and self-sustaining.

So it was quite natural that his regular customers in the firehouse began to miss him when they no longer saw him coming around anymore. But no one knew where he lived or why he had stopped showing up to visit with them and shine their shoes; however, this was not the reason why the firemen did nothing to try to find him. They thought that little Vernon's folks had begun to do better financially, and hence made it possible for the serious-faced little boy to "retire" from business and buckle down to his studies.

They hoped this was so, because Vernon was always talking about "retiring" someday, when his mother and father found steady jobs and could afford to buy him the necessities he needed.

At eleven o'clock on the morning of June 18, 1954, after an absence of five months, little Vernon showed up at the fire station. He was greeted enthusiastically and it was immediately noticed that he did not have his familiar shoeshine box with him.

Although he had been anxiously trying to tell them something, the men laughed and joked and kept him from talking.

When the excitement had subsided, he said in a terse voice that sounded strangely adult, "Please, Mr. Firemen, you gotta come quick. It's a emergency. Old Mr. Clarence is bad off. You gotta help him."

"Who's Mr. Clarence?" one of the men asked.

"He's that old man who lives in the shed down by the dump."

The firemen exchanged concerned glances. "You were down there? What were you doing there, boy, eh? Playing hookey from school or something?"

"No, sir. I was there. I seen him with my own eyes. Please, just don't ask me no more questions. Just hurry up before it's too late."

The humor went out of the faces of the men watching.

They hastily consulted the chief and received the nod to dispatch a fire engine.

Three minutes later the fire team roared onto the city dump and leapt into action at once. They may have wondered *how* it had been possible for little Vernon to have walked or run all the way from the city dump to the firehouse in time to give the alarm. But there was no time for speculation.

A roaring fire was encircling the ramshackle hovel in which old Mr. Clarence lived. And from the screams that were

coming from inside, they knew that the man was trapped inside.

Within a matter of minutes the old man was rescued. A little while later the fire was extinguished and an ambulance arrived to take him to a hospital for treatment of several slight burns. As he was being lifted into the ambulance, the firemen questioned him about how the fire had started.

Old Clarence explained that he had been removing some paint with lacquer thinner and his cigarette had started the blaze.

"Where was little Vernon, the shoeshine boy, when it happened?"

"Little Vernon? You must be mistaken," was the reply. "I didn't see nobody at all around here. Besides, if you mean little Vernon Washington, it couldn't have been him."

"No? Why not?"

"Cause, the poor little tyke got killed last month hooking a ride on the back of a bus. Fell off and got run over by a car. Such a pity. I loved that boy like he was my own kin. A terrible thing. Terrible."

The firemen stood speechless as the ambulance drove away.

They returned to the firehouse at a loss for words. Each man knew now that little Vernon Washington's appearance at the station had been something *beyond* human understanding; and, when they investigated later that day, they learned that old Clarence had told the truth. Little Vernon Washington was dead.

How the manifestation of the boy was seen and heard at the firehouse at eleven o'clock that morning may never be known. The fire fighters who had been present avoid discussing it even now. But the fact remains that the life of the old recluse *was* spared by the apparition of a little boy who came back after death in time to give the alarm.

THE HOBO SPECTRE

Floyd Griffith was a drifter and a hobo, a comparatively young man as far as knights of the road are concerned. He had been on the bum for two years, ever since he had been discharged from the Navy at age twenty-seven. The reason he had chosen that way of life? He had made a promise to himself that if he was lucky enough to live through World

War II, he would spend the rest of his life living from day to day. It was during the battle of the Coral Sea, May 8, 1942, when he made this vow to himself. He never believed he would survive this momentous sea battle, the most savagely fought skirmish of its kind in history, a naval engagement that marked the turning point in the war for the Allies with the sinking of fifteen warships and the damaging and probable sinking of twenty other vessels. Floyd had been aboard a nearby destroyer when the badly damaged carrier, the *Lexington* blew up.

It was the final explosion of the torpedo warheads in her magazines detonating that sent the great ship to the bottom with a bone-grinding roar. That explosion hurled Floyd against a bulkhead from its force and knocked him out.

He had never been the same since. Hence, his vow.

Now, he found himself huddled in a corner of an empty freight car speeding through Illinois in the month of January, 1947.

Although he distinctly remembered having been alone when the train began to pull out of the yards of the nation's great rail center, he did not seem at all surprised when he awakened to see another man riding in the empty box car with him.

The man was in his late forties, unkempt, and emaciated. His cadaverous appearance was spectre-like and his deep-set black eyes were fixed in an almost hypnotic stare upon Floyd.

"When'd you get on?" Floyd asked, raising his voice in order to be heard above the sound of the wheels clacking over the tracks.

The man did not reply. He continued to sit there in the opposite corner, watching him.

"What's the matter, Bo?" Floyd asked. "Can't you talk?"

No reply.

Floyd grew uneasy. He sat for awhile thinking, wondering what to do. The uneasiness became uncomfortable and before long he became annoyed, then angry.

He got up and glared at the man. "What the hell're you staring at? Do I owe you something, Bo?"

No reply. The beady eyes continued to gaze fixedly at him.

Turning his back, Floyd went to the sliding freight car door and viciously kicked it open, venting his fury upon it.

A cold blast of air struck him and rushed into the box

car. It was a bleak afternoon, smoky grey from a threatening overcast that blotted out the sun.

As the train sped along at sixty miles an hour over the brown countryside, Floyd leaned wearily against the doorway and stared at the horizon. He guessed that he was somewhere within a hundred miles south of Chicago, and he found himself hoping that the train might go as far as Georgia or perhaps even Florida, where a warmer climate would be most welcome.

Without quite knowing why, he turned around suddenly. A strange feeling of dread had come over him.

The hobo who had been in the freight car had vanished!

Floyd pulled himself back from the open doorway and flattened against the wall, unable to believe that anyone could have gone out without his seeing him go. The door on the other side of the car was sealed from the outside, and there were no other exits through which the mysterious hobo could have gone.

Uneasily, he settled down into the corner at the front of the car, forward of the open door and tried to figure out if he had actually seen someone in the boxcar with him or not. The more he thought about it, the more he began to doubt his sanity.

Had it been a hallucination? he asked himself.

Or had it been some unexplainable trick his eyes had played on him? Since there were some clumps of excelsior and cardboard packing strewn about the car, it could have been a mirage of some sort formed out of the debris.

Shrugging his thoughts away, Floyd shivered and turned up his collar, trying to get warm inside the shabby overcoat. He drew up his knees, rested his chin on his hands and peered into the gloom.

During the night, while he was asleep, Floyd had a peculiar dream. He had found himself, in the dream, standing at the door of the freight car, looking at the sunrise. Then, as though he was seeing himself in a vision, he saw the cadaverous hobo come up behind him and shove him off the train.

He landed unhurt and began to walk across a seemingly endless field. Then he found himself at a crossroads. Again the spectre of the hobo appeared and pushed him to the right. He walked along the dirt road until he came to a small house. Then he was at the door, opening it and going inside. There he saw a wizened old man reclining on a crude

bed. The old man was beckoning to him and trying to say something but no words came from his toothless mouth.

With a jolt, Floyd awakened. He stood up, balancing himself against the splintery sides of the boxcar to keep from falling as the train rocked and pitched, and stumbled across to the closed sliding door.

He frowned when he remembered that he had left it open the night before, but thinking that it had somehow slid shut of its own accord from the train's momentum, he pushed it open.

The first rays of the morning sun were bathing the country side in a wash of golden light. The warmth of the sunlight felt good and he basked in it for a while, taking his breakfast in the form of big draughts of the fresh, dew-laden air. He was starved, and he wished for a hot cup of strong coffee and a roll.

All of a sudden he felt something give him a hard shove. He went hurtling out of the door. Although the train was traveling at a high rate of speed, he landed on his feet, bewildered and unhurt. Then, as he watched the train vanish in the distance, he recalled the dream.

His hair prickled, and suddenly his hunger was forgotten. Everything seemed unreal as he began to trudge across a field—the same seemingly endless field he had seen in his dream!

He lost all track of time. He walked tirelessly, almost without effort, and despite the now gnawing hunger at the base of his stomach, he felt good. As he walked, the feeling of well-being gradually increased.

Finally, he reached a small rise in the ground, and there, stretched before him were the crossroads he had also envisioned in his dream.

He began to hurry toward it, and without hesitation turned to the right. After he had walked along a dirt road for several miles he saw the house he had remembered. He went directly up to the door as if it was expected of him. He opened it and went inside.

There, on a crude bed was the wizened old man. His arms were outstretched, beckoning with a gnarled, emaciated hand. Floyd knelt beside him. "What is it, old timer? What're you trying to tell me?"

But before he could speak, the old man fell back upon the ticking of the grimy bedding and lapsed into unconsciousness.

Floyd hastily got up and began to look around the small

house, trying to find something to give him. It was obvious that the old man was bedridden and in all probability had not eaten anything for some time. After a few minutes, he found a tin of tea. He made a fire in the woodstove, went outside to the pump he'd noticed on his way in, and filled a pan with water.

He then put it up to boil and returned to the old man's bedside to see what he could do in order to make him more comfortable.

Later that evening the old man managed to sit up after Floyd had patiently administered to his needs and fed him the tea with some honey he had found in a jar. Although the old man could hardly make himself heard, Floyd encouraged him to speak and assured him that he would stay there until he was on his feet again.

The wizened old man smiled and said in a faint whisper, "Thank God my prayers were answered. I was afraid I was going to die out here all alone. I've been meaning to get off this place for years, but where else would I go? I own this house and six hundred acres all around and I've been trying either to sell it or to get somebody to move out here and work the land for me. But nobody would do it, and I didn't have enough in the bank to buy the things I'd need. I'm land rich and money poor. Know what I mean?"

Floyd nodded. After they had talked for a while longer, Floyd told him about the strange events which had brought him there. The old man smiled a knowing smile, and settled back again. Then he dropped off to sleep.

As the days passed, the old man gradually regained his strength. He was deeply grateful to Floyd and in appreciation, made him a proposition. "If you will stay here with me and make something of this place, I'll leave you everything I own when I die. I'm past my three-score and ten and I figure I'm on borrowed time right now. What do you say? Is it a deal?"

Floyd nodded. They shook hands. And then Floyd rolled up his sleeves and got to work.

Almost as though someone had worked a miracle, a real estate broker showed up a few days later with a check for the old man. He had sold a hundred acres of the land for a tidy sum. With this money as working capital, Floyd bought a truck and a small tractor and building supplies. Men were hired to begin building sheds and a barn and the land was tilled, ready for the spring planting.

Within two years the farm had prospered beyond the old

man's wildest dreams. As he sat with Floyd in the front seat of the truck one afternoon, he smiled and said, "Floyd, I can't express how grateful I am for all you've done since you came here. It does my tired old eyes good to see all that land of ours out there bringing in our second crop of wheat and soy bean and corn. Yessir, it was worth staying alive to see. Now I can rest in peace, feeling that I had kept my promise to God that I'd live a worthwhile life."

Floyd looked at him, a puzzled frown on his face. "*Your* promise to God? I don't understand."

The old man smiled and leaned back against the seat. He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and then seemed to drop off to sleep. Floyd called to him, then shook him, but he was dead.

Although he had never asked the old man anything about his past life, Floyd had had a strange feeling all along that he would be told about it when the time was right. And now he apparently was never to know.

However, Floyd was wrong.

He found among the old man's effects a letter addressed to him. In brief, it told him the story of his life, how he had traveled around the world as a young man, had "jumped ship" in Bombay more than fifty years before and had gone to live with a group of Hindu mystics in an isolated monastery. There, the letter continued, "I attained the Cosmic Consciousness. In my communion with God, I made a pact with Him, that I would return to the land of my fathers and there would live and work the land and give more to the world than I had when I arrived on earth.

"And so, Floyd Griffith, you were summoned in a mysterious way, by my astral self, to come to me and to help me in the fulfillment of my obligation to God and to myself. Reach back into the deepest recesses of your memory and you will know that it was I who bid you to come forth.

"Perhaps, Floyd, you wonder how a poor and humble man such as myself came to be the owner of so much wealth in land. I inherited this land from my father, who had died by his own hand when the bank he owned failed in the depression of 1893. At the time I was so ashamed of him that I ran off to the four corners of the earth, trying to find myself, trying to learn who I was and why I was alive. I found those answers in India.

"When I returned to America in 1915 I learned about the land I had inherited. This came as a surprise to me and I thanked God that I now had a chance to fulfill my promise.

But ill-health and lack of funds made it impossible for me to till the soil and sow the seeds of my promise. The years passed and then, as I lay on the threshold of death, I projected myself on the Astral planes of the ether world and searched for someone to help me. Although you did not know it then, *I* knew that you would heed and obey my unspoken wishes. And so, rightfully, all that I owned while I was a mortal upon earth is now yours. May God be with you and keep you. Find a good woman and marry her and have children so that they too may inherit the harvest of the crops we have sown today."

Floyd Griffith blinked back his tears as he finished the letter. He carefully folded it and was about to put it away in a strongbox for safekeeping when it suddenly disintegrated in his hands! He stared in awe as the fine white powder sifted down to the floor and said, in a half whisper, "Thanks, old timer. You won't be disappointed."

A short time later Floyd met the girl who later became his wife and bore him three robust children. His first-born, a son, he named after the mystic. But he never told his wife *why* he had decided upon *that* particular name. He did not have to explain. His wife already *knew* the old man's name and much of what there was to know about him, because he had been her uncle, a man she had infrequently seen because she lived in California.

When Floyd had obeyed the instructions in the old man's will, notifying him to contact his niece and several other distant relatives, the girl came to the funeral to pay her last respects.

She took one look at Floyd and he took one look at her, and they *both* knew they were meant for each other.

But Floyd Griffith also realized something else. The old man had deliberately brought them together. How was it that he had come to this realization? Floyd found a curious inscription in the old man's bible:

"O night that didst lead thee,
O night that became my dawn;
O night that brings thee to thee,
Lover to lover's sight forever on,
In marriage eternal, on and on and on."

And in the back of the bible, he found written the words of a Hindu ascetic:

"Oh Mother Earth, Father Sky,
Brother Wind, Friend Light, Sweetheart Water,
Here take my last salutation with folded hands!
For today I am melting away into the Supreme
Because my heart became pure,
And all delusion vanished,
Through the power of your good company."

THE RESCUE SHIP WAS A GHOST

THERE IS ONE TIME of the year when boat captains avoid crossing the Florida Straits off the north coast of Cuba and the Florida Keys. That is during the winter months, when the seas are unusually choppy and many unexpected wind and sea currents prevail, causing voyagers much distress—and sometimes *worse.*

But the night in January when a little group of Cubans gathered aboard a leaky boat somewhere off Matanzas Province in a hidden cove near Cardenas Bay on the north coast of Cuba, the weather and the conditions at sea could not have mattered less to them.

Their only concern was *escape.*

They had planned and waited for that night for months and only one thing mattered: get away from Castro's red hell safely.

Once this was accomplished, the four women, two men and three children in the company were confident that God would take care of the rest. Somehow the weather conditions and the tricky ocean currents did not worry them; nor did the forty-year old leaky boat they had managed to outfit and make ready for their voyage. They believed that if God was willing, they would arrive in Florida safely, where they would be reunited with their exiled relatives and friends.

They sailed out of the secluded cove in the dead of night, each person aboard tensed and anxious, fearful that the chugging sound of the engine would be heard by some of Castro's patrols.

All went well. They had managed to leave the coastal waters of Cuba within several hours and by morning, found themselves in a vast sea, with no land in sight.

But as the day drew on, they knew they were in trouble.

The leaky boat was beginning to take on water faster than they could bail it out, and the engine was beginning to falter. By noon, it had stopped dead.

Then the winds began to rise and along with them, the seas grew increasingly rough. Buffeted by the wind and tossed around like a cork on the churning seas, the little band of people began to wish they had never left the Communist stronghold in the Caribbean.

It became obvious that the boat was not going to make it and they would, in all probability, have to abandon the craft and hope for the best aboard the nine-man raft which had been lashed to the roof of the cabin.

Although the two men in the group had never been to sea before, they had common sense enough to realize that they had better make hasty preparations to launch the raft and stow their meagre provisions aboard it. This was done, and not five minutes too soon, because the foundering wooden boat started listing dangerously and then began to sink.

They watched it go down from the safety of the survival raft and without much ado, turned away from the sputtering bubbles which marked the watery grave of the vessel, and put up the sail and the mast.

The children were the first to get sick. Before long, as the elements unleashed the furies of an angry storm, all of them were so seasick that no one could attend to the navigation or the manipulation of the sail. Not even when the gale force winds swept half of their provisions and the sail and mast into the sea, was anyone able to make the effort to salvage anything.

Somewhere between sunset and sunrise on their second day at sea, they grew aware of something pulling the raft. One of the men, who had been slumped in a corner of the raft with his hand trailing in the water, noticed that there was a current running before them. He kept his wits and turned around to see an incredible sight—they were being towed by a large white yacht. He vaguely made out the name, *Marana*, and muttering it over and over to himself, he lapsed into unconsciousness, too ill to wonder why the people aboard the yacht hadn't taken them off the raft, and too weak from exposure to the sea and winds to have been able to do anything about it.

On the morning of the third day they awoke one by one feeling the warmth of a tropical sun beaming down. For the first time in days they were able to sit up and feel like human beings again.

Suddenly, one of the women stood up and began to shout, pointing to the east where the faint outline of what

appeared to be a small island could be seen in the blinding glare of the sun. They began to paddle toward it.

When they reached the shore, they knelt in prayer.

The man remembered the strange ship he'd seen towing them. He related what he had seen and they exchanged perplexed looks. If a ship had really towed them to safety, why were they left in the raft?

But before they could discuss it further, a low-flying plane swooped over the small spit of an island, dipped its wings and headed north.

Later that afternoon a boat arrived to pick them up and take them to Nassau in the British West Indies.

Weeks after that, after they had been taken to Miami, the refugee who had seen the ghost ship made inquiries of the Cuban boatmen along the Miami river.

"You must be mistaken," he was told. "The boat you say you had seen, the *Marana*, sunk in the Atlantic Ocean some time ago!"

"Yes," the man shrugged and said, "perhaps you are right. I was delirious. I was out of my head, so I probably imagined it."

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the refugees could not have drifted so many miles *against* the elements in so short a period of time. According to expert navigators who know those waters well, such a journey would have taken, not three days, but at least *six* days of drifting—and only then, if the wind was *not* coming from the northeast, as it was at that time.

Had the man who awakened from his delirium *imagined* he had seen a ghost ship towing them, or had he really seen it? The truth may never be known. But then again, what *is* the truth?

THE PHANTOM FEAST

Guillermo Vertiz had been fighting the losing battle with the Loyalists during most of 1938 and 1939. Then as the tide of battle turned and the *Francistas* began to rout the Loyalists, those who could escape under their own power, fled toward the Pyrénées. Guillermo was among the droves of fleeing people, struggling against the elements, the cold and hunger, to cross the frozen wastes of ragged mountains to France, and safety.

In such a mass exodus, every man and woman was for himself. There was no time for tarrying. The *Francistas* were at their heels, baying like wolves after the scent. Of the refugees, little could be said of them, except that they were a sorry, pitiable lot.

Marching along with thousands of other disillusioned men returning from Barcelona and other points in Spain, young Guillermo could think of only two things: a warm climate, and filling his hungry belly with food and drink.

He had been ordered, along with his comrades in arms, not to stop for the hundreds of refugees they would meet along the march. To do so, the commanding officer warned, would be suicide. Moreover, if any man among them was to fall, unable to continue the rigorous march, he was to be left to his own fate. Such were the bitter instructions of a defeated army.

When his company had reached a point approximately 115 kilometres from the French border over the mountains, the long line of weary men came upon a tragic sight.

Bending over the prostrate form of a soldier in a rag-tag Loyalist uniform, was a frail young woman. She was attempting to stop the flow of blood issuing forth from the bullet wounds of the fallen man. As the battle-hardened veterans trudged past, they shook their heads compassionately, knowing that such stomach wounds were nearly always fatal. Obviously, there was no hope for the man.

But just as Guillermo came abreast of the woman, he found himself unable to go on. So tragic was the sight of that young woman kneeling over the fallen man, that his heart immediately went out to her—he had to do something. He could not force himself to go on, especially after seeing her pathetic face, and despite the derisive comments of his companions who told him, "Hey, Guillermo, what you want to do, commit suicide with them? You know he is beyond help. You know the *Francistas* are at our heels like jackals . . ."

As their voices and the sound of the trudging feet diminished, leaving him behind, Guillermo went to the woman's aid. He stopped her from giving the man water to drink, telling her that to do so would be certain death for men wounded in the intestines.

With several long poles taken from a wrecked horse-cart, Guillermo fashioned a crude stretcher. He then placed the wounded man on a pallet of rags which he made fast to the poles. With the man then supported a few inches above the

ground, young Guillermo bent his shoulders to the almost impossible task of dragging the stretcher along, and proceeded to follow the refugees.

As he trudged along, he was possessed with but one thought: he had to carry the man to safety, to take him to France. Although he knew the odds were against him, that in all probability the man would probably die before he could get him to safety, or to a doctor, he somehow could not think of anything else except pulling the man behind him.

He wondered why he was doing this, and he also marvelled at his own stamina, the strange new strength that had suddenly begun to surge through his muscles, enabling him to go on. Only a short time before, Guillermo had desperately struggled to march along beside his companions at arms, but now, he was walking easier, almost effortlessly, and hardly feeling the pangs of hunger at all.

Occasionally, when he would pause to check the makeshift sled and the bindings securing his helpless passenger, the man would look at him with grateful eyes and would try to form words with his lips, but no sound would come. As his wife moved along beside him, her eyes filled with tears of gratitude, Guillermo could not help but feel the surge of power that went through him.

Despite the bitter cold and the deep snow drifts, and despite the fact that the main body of refugees seemed to be floundering in the vast, barren wasteland over which they were marching, Guillermo continued on and on without let-up.

The soldier's wife came up beside him and asked in a timid voice, "Are we not going in the wrong direction?"

Guillermo nodded. "No. We are going the right way. The others seek an easier way; but there are none."

"But how do you know this? You do not have a map, or a compass?" the woman asked him worriedly.

To this Guillermo replied, "I do not know *how* I know which way we must travel, but all I can say is that I go by the same instinct that forced me to stop and help you."

"*Forced you?*" queried the woman in astonishment.

Guillermo nodded. "*Sí.* I felt forced to do what I have done. I do not know why or how, but my feet would just not go on. It is strange, I admit, but that is all I can tell you."

Without pausing to rest, they continued their march all that night and all the next day. When they finally came to a flatland where they could rest, Guillermo cautioned the woman and bade her to remain concealed behind a rock.

He pointed up, to the peaks they had to climb and told her, "We must wait here until dark. We must not go in the logical direction for we will be shot."

The woman looked at him in surprise. She turned her gaze toward the foothills stretching beyond them through which they had just come. "But I see no one."

Guillermo smiled thinly. He closed his eyes and huddled in the shelter of a rock. "They will come, so you will remain beside your husband and wait."

It was nearly dusk when Guillermo awakened, tapped the woman on the shoulder and motioned. "See," he pointed down at the foothills.

"Merciful God!" the woman gasped. Before them, as far as the eye could see, were hundreds of *Francistas!* She turned to look up at him with awe in her eyes. "How did you know they would be following us through the ravines?"

Guillermo shrugged. "I do not know. I just knew it somehow. I cannot explain *how* I knew."

What happened after that is history. The *Francistas* captured thousands of the fleeing Loyalists and frightened, trail-weary refugees. Those who were not slaughtered were herded in mile-long columns, in the death marches back to Spain.

When it was safe for them to resume their journey, Guillermo reshouldered his burden and they continued, taking food where they found it. Five days later they reached freedom—the French border.

After his badly wounded passenger had been taken to a hospital, Guillermo sat sharing bread and cheese and wine with the man's wife in a refugee camp before striking out again for his home. The woman pressed his big hand gratefully to her cheek and said, "My husband is a fine cook. He says that someday he will cook you a fine meal. He swore this to me last night and I hope someday that he will. But it looks like," she said, breaking off in a spasm of sobs, "he will not live to make that promise good."

Guillermo stood up. He gently patted her head and said, "He will live and someday he will cook me that meal. I shall depend on it."

The next morning Guillermo learned that a large funeral was being held for many refugees who had died during the night. But Guillermo did not go to the funeral. He walked away toward the line of trucks waiting to disperse the refugees and he had a strange lilt to his step and a lightness in his heart. He did not know why he felt this when perhaps

he should have been saddened at the prospect of the death of the soldier he had rescued, but he did not pause to reflect. He somehow *knew* that the man would be all right.

That feeling was to come true a decade later. The time was 1948. The place, Acapulco, Mexico.

Guillermo and his wife were visiting the resort city for a few days when for no reason he could explain, he suddenly took his wife by the hand and said, "Come, we are going to have a fine dinner—one that we shall remember for the rest of our lives."

His wife looked at him, shrugged and smiled. But Guillermo did not pay attention to her. His smiling face was fixed on a small restaurant several blocks away from their hotel. They could see it from the sidewalk on the hill they were descending.

Then, when they went in, a man in a waiter's uniform took one look at Guillermo, rushed over to him and clasped him like a long-lost brother. "It is you!" he cried.

Although Guillermo did not recognize the man at first, he did recognize the man's wife. It seems that a few years after their escape had been made, the wounded soldier and his wife went to Mexico where they opened a small restaurant.

Indeed, Guillermo *did* enjoy a meal fit for a king that day. It was quite a reunion—the happy ending to an amazing, but true experience. But no one was more delighted, or happier, than the dying soldier who *didn't* die—who returned to cook a feast for his rescuer in another land, thousands of miles away, at another, happier time.

Just why Guillermo had been impelled to act as he did, or how he had "sensed" what he had to do, he cannot explain. The fact remains that it happened, and in all probability, Guillermo himself would not be alive today if he had not stopped to carry another human being to freedom—for not one among his company of soldiers lived to tell the tale; all were killed in the blood baths that followed.

THE MYSTERY AT THE BATTLE OF ST. LO

DURING THE eight-day siege of St. Lo, the First Army under General Courtney Hodges hammered away at the Nazis with everything they had. Gradually, they effected the breakthrough.

The Americans, performing deeds beyond belief, time and again were pinned down, caught in the relentless cross-fire of the German 88's.

A squad of GIs, led by Sgt. Joel Dearborn, found themselves cut-off from the main body of troops during a skirmish. They took cover in a partially demolished building which was somewhat in the open, surrounded by a field on one side and a broad avenue on the other. Their position was precarious.

Unable to retreat because of the withering fire from machine guns and not too distant 88's which had them zeroed in, it became apparent that they were hopelessly trapped.

It was imperative that the sergeant get back to headquarters because his detail had been scouting the German outposts and had vital information concerning several gun emplacements which had to be knocked out before the army could move further up.

"Man, what I wouldn't give to see a couple of those Shermans right about now," the sergeant said to a private beside whom he had been crouching beneath a shot-out window.

"Yeah, that's the only thing that would get us outta this spot—a tank. A big old tank."

Almost as if in reply to their wish, the welcome sound of an approaching Sherman tank could be heard above the gun fire. It skirted the perimeter of the field beyond and turned its guns on the machine gun nests which had been chattering away at the trapped GIs without a break for more than an hour.

Three shots from the tank scored direct hits on the hidden machine gun positions. The rain of bullets ceased.

The men in the ruins cried out jubilantly and then, just as they were poised to begin making a break across the open, an 88 thundered, then another, and another, launching a salvo of shells at their position. A direct hit was scored, killing all but the sergeant and the man beside him.

They crouched in the building, hardly daring to peer outside as the shells continued to explode all around them. Then the tank's engine was heard again. The private crept across the floor amid the rubble and corpses of his buddies. He looked out and said, "Lookit! The tank's going up the hill after the 88's."

Several minutes later they watched the great tank train its guns on the German artillery position camouflaged behind a wall at the top of the hill. It opened fire. And then,

with its guns spitting shell after shell at the Germans, the tank began to drive right up to the emplacement.

Realizing that the German artillery had stopped firing on their position for the moment, Sgt. Dearborn tapped the infantryman's shoulder and made a gesture with his thumb. They darted out of the ruins, and running zig-zag across the open, they raced to safety.

Just as they got to cover in a clump of trees off the road, they saw the tank explode and burst into flames. Both men felt sick. They turned away in silence and hurried back to their lines.

After they had reported to headquarters and the sergeant had turned his information over to the officer in command, he related the incident of the tank and thanked him for having ordered it up to get them out.

"I didn't send the tank up there," the sergeant was told. "In fact, every available tank is in action up the line. There isn't a single tank here now, and there won't be until later this afternoon. You must be mistaken."

Before the sergeant could say anything else, the German guns began to thunder again, raining their position with exploding shells.

Several days later, after the battle of St. Lo had been won, the sergeant went back to the hill where the tank had been, to look for the remains of the charred hulk.

A sentry at the top of the hill challenged, "Hey, Mac, just where the hell do you think you're going?"

"I wanted to take a look at the tank that shot it out with the Germans three days ago. I saw it myself. They took an 88 and blew up."

The GI sentry shook his head from side to side slowly. He continued to nod as he said, "You got the wrong dope, Mac. Ain't any shot-up tanks up here. Never was, either."

"But I tell you, *I* saw it. It got us out of a tight squeeze. We were pinned down in that building over there. That tank saved our lives."

"Look, Mac. Take a GOOD look," the GI said wearily. "Now tell me if you see any tanks out there? And another thing, notice how soft the ground is on that hill? If a tank *had* driven up here when you say it did, don't you think there'd at least be tracks in the ground. Well, where are they? Go on and see for yourself."

Sgt. Dearborn did look for himself. He could not locate any tank tracks whatsoever, nor even the remains of the Sherman tank. He walked around for a while, then stood

silent as he looked down the hill he had just climbed. In the soft earth he could see his own footprints, the only evidence that convinced him that *he* was there.

The uncanny appearance of a tank that had made it possible for Sgt. Joel Dearborn and one surviving member of his squad to escape from certain death is wholly unexplainable. However, what counts is that the sergeant was able to deliver valuable information to his superiors which helped the Allies save many lives and cut short a battle that most certainly would have taken longer to win.

Several weeks later, Sgt. Joel Dearborn was killed in action.

The private who had been with him that day in July, 1944, returned to his home in New York after the war and finished his schooling under the GI-Bill. He is now a clinical psychologist whose "hobby" is psychical research. . . .

THE DOUBLE HEX OF THE VOODOO DIVORCE

The young attorney had just hurried into his office near the courthouse in downtown Miami to keep an appointment with a client who was suing her husband for divorce, when his secretary said, "Mrs. Williams is on the phone now. She said she won't be able to go to the hearing today."

The lawyer took the call, his manner somewhat abrupt with annoyance. "What's this all about, Mrs. Williams? First you worry me to distraction about getting you an early hearing date and then when I get it, you can't make it."

"I'm sorry about this," the woman's voice replied weakly over the receiver. "But I'm so sick with a terrible headache that I can hardly stand to keep this telephone against my ear. I've had this headache for a week now and I can't for the life of me see how I'll make it today."

The attorney glanced at his watch. "It would be too late even if you did try to get here," he sighed. "Hang on and I'll see if I can get a postponement."

He pressed the hold button and made a quick and urgent phone call. After a brief but emphatic conversation, he returned to the line his client was holding.

"All right, Mrs. Williams. It's okay. I was lucky enough to get the hearing postponed until Friday. That's two days from now. And it's absolutely a *must* that you be in my office no later than one o'clock. Is that clear?"

There was a long silence before the woman replied. Her voice was anguished and she seemed to be speaking with great difficulty. "The way I feel right now, I don't know. Unless this headache goes away by Friday, I don't think I'll be able to make it then, either."

Exasperated, the attorney asked, "Have you seen a doctor?"

"Yes. But he couldn't do anything."

"Have you ever had headaches like this before?"

"No, never."

"Then what do you think is causing it? Are you worried about the divorce? Sometimes worry can cause a headache."

After a long pause the woman answered, "No, I'm not worried about the divorce itself. But you got me to thinking."

"Yes?"

"You know our religion—we're voodoo folks, you know."

"No, I didn't know."

"Well, like I said, you got me to thinking. I'll bet my husband went and got the witch doctor to put a voodoo hex on my head!"

The attorney shook his own head in disbelief as he looked through the connecting door of his office to his secretary, who was listening in on the extension. The girl blinked at him and nodded incredulously.

"Well, maybe that's why I got this headache so bad," the woman continued. "But don't you worry, sir. I'll be at your office at one like you want me to, after all. I know how to fix it now."

At five minutes before one on Friday, the attorney rose to greet his client, Mrs. Williams. "From that smile on your face," he said, "I'll say that your headache is cured."

"It sure is!" she laughed, going outside through the door he had opened for her as they prepared to walk together to the courthouse.

"How'd you get cured?" he asked.

They walked across the street and started up the courthouse steps before she replied. "I went to my own witch doctor and I told him I thought my husband put a hex on me. Well, he fixed that right away. My headache went away quicker'n you can push that elevator button."

They entered the elevator cab as she continued: "So, I fixed my husband good. He won't be here today at the court hearing."

The attorney stepped off the elevator and gripped her

arm, halting her in the corridor before they entered the judge's chambers. "What was that you just said?"

She looked at him, a confident smile on her face. "I said that my husband ain't going to be here at the hearing. I got my witch doctor to un-hex me and put a double-hex on him."

The lawyer laughed and they entered the judge's chambers. His legal, logical mind could not accept such superstition.

A few minutes later, after they had been seated at the conference table waiting for the husband and his lawyer to appear, the door finally opened. Mrs. Williams looked at her attorney and smiled knowingly.

The attorney for her husband entered alone, looking rather harried and upset, and addressed the judge who had been at his desk busily reading some documents while they waited. "If it please the court, I beg the court's pardon, and ask if this hearing can be postponed. The defendant, my client, Mr. Williams, is home ill."

The judge removed his glasses and looked at the attorney. "What's wrong with him?"

"He has a violent headache."

The judge was obviously annoyed. He looked at the attorney and said, "We've already had too many postponements."

"I know, sir, but—"

"Denied. I cannot consider a headache a reasonable excuse for the defendant. The court finds in favor of the plaintiff by default."

It would seem that even in a court of law the strange and mysterious workings of the supernatural can be manifested. And who knows how many other cases or kingdoms have been won or lost because of a voodoo curse?

THE SNOWSTORM THAT WASN'T THERE

Dr. Louis Ulrich and his wife, Maude, were on their way to Chicago where he was to attend a medical seminar.

Despite the fact that it was early in December, the physician suggested that they drive up the "long way" touring through a part of the country they had never before visited.

"A marvelous idea!" Maude exclaimed as they left their home. "And look, we won't have to go too far out of the way to drop in at Barbara and Al's in Allentown."

Two days later, they found themselves driving along a picturesque road in Pennsylvania.

It was one o'clock and the day was bright and sunny with hardly a cloud in the sky, when Maude suggested that they have a bite to eat. "We can still be in Allentown by eight tonight, even if we stop for an hour now. Is that all right with you, Louis?"

The physician nodded and proceeded to keep his eye open for a restaurant. After a few minutes he saw a diner and a small motel on the highway and he gestured toward it, "Want to try this place?"

"Why not?" Maude replied. "It's sort of quaint, don't you think?"

He laughed and parked between the diner and the entrance to the motel. Then they went inside, made themselves comfortable at a booth in the back, and had a leisurely meal.

At two o'clock they arose and went to pay the check. At the door, Maude turned and gestured to her husband, a look of dismay on her face. "Isn't that awful? It's snowing."

The doctor stepped outside and shrugged in defeat. "Now doesn't *that* take the cake. Who'd have believed that we'd run into a snowstorm on a beautiful day like today?"

Maude shivered and clung to his arm. "Darling," she said, "I don't think we ought to drive any more if the weather's going to be like this. What do you think?"

After several moments, he said, "We have two choices. One, to try to make it to Allentown. Two, to stay here. If we try to drive through, we may wind up God knows where, in a snow drift or worse. If we stay here, we may be snowbound also. Which means—"

Interrupting him with a laugh, she said it for him: "We may as well stay here and be comfortable."

Dr. Ulrich smiled at his wife. "I'm tempted. Besides, I could do with a good long sleep where nobody can find me. Anyway, I'm bushed. That mattress we slept on last night felt like a rockpile." They checked into the motel, where the doctor promptly decided to take a nap.

It was past seven when the physician woke up that evening. Maude, who had been propped up on the pillows watching television, kissed him and said, "Have a good sleep?"

He yawned and nodded. "It still snowing?"

"Yes. Everything's covered and it's still coming down. I haven't seen a car on the road for the longest while."

"Feel like something to eat?"

Maude shrugged. "The thought of getting dressed to go out—even those few steps to the diner, chills me to my toes. But we don't have to go out. There are some sandwiches left over from yesterday in the travel case with the thermos."

After they had eaten and finished the left-over coffee, they settled back to spend a relaxing night, watching television and just taking it easy.

But Dr. Ulrich and his wife were *not* to relax on that particular night in December. They found that out at eleven P.M. when someone began a frantic hammering on their door.

The physician hurriedly arose, put on his robe, and opened the door. A woman stood there, her face ashen, her hands and fingers opening and closing nervously. She was the wife of the motel owner and had shown them to their room while her husband carried in their bags. "Forgive me for disturbing you like this," she cried. "But I noticed on the register that you are a doctor. I hope to God you're a medical doctor!"

"I am. What's the matter?"

"Come with me, doctor. Quickly. It's my husband. I don't know what's wrong with him," she explained as she ran before him down the long corridor. "He went to move the desk chair and suddenly he fell, holding his chest, and gasping for air. He said it felt like he was being squeezed in a vise."

"Did he ever have a heart attack before?"

Her face, already ashen, paled even more. "Is *that* what you think he's having? No, he never had one before," she cried, opening the door and leading him inside.

Dr. Ulrich hastily examined the man who lay on the floor of the room. He turned to the woman and said, "My emergency bag. Hurry."

Less than a minute later he had prepared and administered an injection of adrenalin.

An hour later, the man was resting comfortably and his pulse and respiration were normal.

"It's a lucky thing my husband and I were here tonight," Maude said a short while later as the three of them sat in the room drinking coffee. "Louis said your husband couldn't have lasted five minutes longer with the seizure he had."

"Thank God for that," the motel owner's wife sighed.

"No," Maude said, winking at her husband. "You can thank that snowstorm for us being here tonight. If it wasn't

for that, we'd be spending the night with friends in Allentown."

The woman looked at her, a puzzled look on her face. "What snowstorm?"

Maude and her husband exchanged glances. Then Maude replied, "The snowstorm that started around two o'clock. You can't be serious, can you?"

The motel owner's wife stared at them for a moment, her mouth agape. She stood up abruptly, went to the window and opened the blinds. She looked outside and then pointed. "It isn't snowing. And so far this winter, we haven't had even a flurry of snow. Come, see for yourselves."

Dr. Ulrich and his wife stood up. They looked at each other apprehensively and then they stared outside. There was no snow on the ground.

As Maude tried to explain, the doctor nudged her. She took the hint and said, instead, "We've had a trying day. Call us if you need anything."

"And I'll look in on your husband every hour or so," the physician said. "Try to get some rest, too. If we're able to move him in the morning, he had better be hospitalized for a while. Tests, cardiograms, and so forth are necessary."

After they were alone in their room again, Maude looked at her husband inquiringly. "Why did you nudge me?"

Dr. Louis Ulrich stretched out on the bed in his clothes. He took a deep breath and smiled faintly. "Darling, what good would it have done to have told her?" Then he laughed and closed his eyes. "Besides, who'd ever believe a wild story like this about a snowstorm that wasn't there?"

"But—?"

"Shh, and come to bed. There're a lot of odd things we see but cannot explain in this life. We saw a snowstorm that wasn't there and as a result we saved a man's life. What *else* is there to know? Mission accomplished, like they say in the movies."

THE MAN WHO WAS TWO PLACES AT ONCE

SHORT, STOCKY Burton Avery lived a rather secretive life in a thirty-dollar a month back room in a rooming house near downtown Richmond, Virginia. His somewhat cherubic, ruddy face and thick shock of blond, curly hair belied his age of fifty-one. His twinkling eyes and knob of a clown-like

nose served to make people believe that he was an outgoing, fun-loving, gregarious individual who made friends easily and loved people. This was not the case, for *Burtie*, as he was called, was anything *but* a friendly, sociable sort.

Of those who knew him, only one man knew him well. That man was Burtie's employer, Harry Foster.

Harry, who was called "Wholesale Harry" by his friends and customers, was a dapper little gentleman with thinning black hair and a hair-line of a black mustache that seemed to twitch whenever he did business successfully, which was all of the time.

Harry's business was buying and selling merchandise. It was an all-cash business, quite different from the usual establishment where books are kept, invoices and purchase orders filled out and licenses kept hanging on the walls. To be accurate, Wholesale Harry did all his business from his hat, in pool rooms, bars and back alleys, wherever his customers agreed to meet him.

Once Harry had taken an order from a customer, he would then put Burtie, his administrative assistant and purchasing agent to work. Whenever the merchandise was not readily available for a price that Harry wanted to pay, Burtie would assume another role, that of procurement agent, on the promise of a bonus.

Wholesale Harry dealt in all sorts of merchandise, equipment, products and by-products of products; and, whether it was a set of fancy chromium hub caps, an outboard motor, a baby carriage, or any one of 1,001 different items, it made little difference. He accepted the order and always delivered.

Because Harry's credo was "I can get it for you *cheaper* than wholesale," Burtie was frequently forced to go to great lengths to obtain some of the goods his boss sold.

On one such occasion, Burtie, who had never in his entire life ever been suspected of doing anything officially termed as "dishonest," and who had never been arrested or even given a ticket for jaywalking, suddenly found himself in an embarrassing situation.

While tracking down an item in a neighboring city, he was arrested and placed in a police line-up, where the complainant, a night watchman with a big, fresh bandage on his head pointed at Burtie and cried, "That's him. He's the one who sneaked up and clobbered me."

It seemed that a thief had broken into a bonded ware-

house, knocked out the night watchman, and tried to steal a truck-load of bourbon, in kegs.

And it also seemed that the night watchman had come to in time to sound the alarm just as the thief, whom he clearly saw, drove off with all those barrels of whiskey. The cops found the truck several hours later, after the robbery.

It was empty. The barrels of whiskey had vanished.

All this had happened at two-thirty in the morning, and because at five o'clock that morning, Burtie was happily strolling down the street, singing at the top of his voice. The cops, already alerted to the theft, pulled him in for questioning.

At three the next afternoon, the police booked Burtie formally. The following day, after a night in the city jail, he was brought before a judge for a hearing. This wasn't fair, Burtie complained. "I'm not a man to do anything like that. It's some other guy, so help me!"

The judge looked at Burtie and frowned. "Guilty or not guilty?" he demanded.

Burtie did not flinch under the judge's withering gaze. "Not guilty."

A public defender was then appointed to represent Burtie.

Before the court-appointed attorney could begin questioning his client about the facts of the case, the defendant stepped up to the judge and said, "Your honor, I ask that the charges against me be dismissed and that you let me go."

Startled, the judge blinked and inquired, "On what grounds do you make this motion?"

Without hesitation and without attempting to discuss it with his attorney, Burtie explained, "Sir, I am not the man. I did not rob the warehouse. I was not anywhere near the warehouse and I never saw that watchman before in my life. I can prove it. I was somewhere else at the time."

"You say you can *prove* you were somewhere else at the time the liquor was stolen from the bonded warehouse?"

"Yessir. I tried to tell the policemen who picked me up, but no one would listen. From one o'clock in the morning until around four, I was in a bar, drinking. About two o'clock, which is a half-hour *before* that man says he was robbed, some crook came into the bar and tried to lift my wallet. I grabbed him and sat on him until the cops came. They finally got there around two-twenty-five. I told them what happened and this guy what I caught with his hand in my pocket called me a liar. I grabbed him and the cops started to lock us both up. There was this big argument

and the bartender and a whole bunch of guys in the bar stood around saying how it wasn't fair they should do a thing like that to me, with me being the innocent victim. So, the cops finally arrested the pickpocket, and I stayed around in the bar until four o'clock. I was walking to the railroad station to catch the six-fifteen to Richmond when these policemen who just testified grabbed me off the street. And that's the so-help-me-God truth, your honor."

The judge then looked at the prosecution. "Did you check into his alibi?"

"We didn't know he had one," came the reply.

"Then I suggest that you check his story. Hearing postponed until five o'clock."

"If it please the court," the prosecutor said. "We have additional evidence that the defendant is the guilty man. A closed-circuit television camera on the warehouse premises was activated at the time of the break-in. We did not think it would be necessary to bring in this additional evidence, but we would now like to introduce it to the court."

"Then by all means do so—at five," the judge said.

As the hearing was about to resume before the judge whose task it was to determine whether or not Burtie was to be arraigned and charged with grand larceny, the defense attorney asked his client, "Are you sure you don't want to change your plea? When they show those films and if your picture is on them, you'll be in big trouble. It might go easier if you plead guilty."

Burtie's eyes twinkled at the lawyer. "Why do you want me to do that? Do you think I'm guilty?"

The judge came in just at that moment and asked that the television camera films of the robbery be shown. A few minutes later when the lights were turned on, the judge glared at Burtie and asked, "Do you deny those films were those of yourself committing the crime?"

"Yessir, I do. Those pictures might have looked like me, but I tell you I was somewhere else at the time."

The judge exhaled and wearily said, "All right. Let's hear from the officers who were supposed to have arrested the pickpocket at the bar this man says he was at last night."

A most incredible thing happened next.

The two officers who came into the courtroom positively identified Burtie and even went on to state that after they had called the police wagon that came to pick up the pickpocket, one man remained on duty across the street from the

bar where he could observe everyone who entered or left. He saw Burtie leave a few minutes before five.

The bartender and several of the men who had been in the bar at the time testified next. They also swore that he had been with them from one until five o'clock.

Perplexed, the judge ordered the film of the robbery shown again. As they watched the pictures, the judge exclaimed, "I don't see how it's possible. The films are clear enough to satisfy any court in the land that the man in the pictures and the defendant are one and the same. The clothes are the same, the physical appearance, and everything is identical. Yet you say—and five credible witnesses have so testified—that the defendant was in the barroom at the time the crime was being committed? How can a man be in two places at once? Is there any other tangible proof—?"

"There is, your honor," one of the policemen said, approaching the bench, holding out a small envelope.

"Last night after we arrested the man the defendant said had attempted to pick his pocket, my partner returned, as it was testified, to keep the bar under surveillance. As a routine procedure in this city, my fellow officer made some photographs of the men in the bar. The defendant is among them."

The judge looked at the pictures and shook his head in confusion. He thought it over for a moment and then said, "How can a man be in two places at once? It is impossible. So is this case. Due to lack of evidence and because there's a reasonable doubt about this man's guilt, I herewith dismiss this hearing."

Burtie left the courtroom, caught the next train back to Richmond and was never seen or heard from in that city again.

Some time later Burtie was seen, by a number of reliable witnesses, boarding a plane in Washington, D. C. bound for Paris. He was also seen, by another pair of reliable witnesses, boarding a plane that took off at the very same time for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Who were these reliable witnesses?

None other than government men who, never quite convinced that Burtie was innocent of the liquor theft, had been shadowing him all along.

He has not been seen since. But who knows, if he does turn up, he may again be seen in two places at the same time.

THE LOST PATROL OF RATHBONE'S ROAD

In November of 1885, a trader named Thomas Rathbone convinced the merchants of Durban, a city on the south-eastern coast of Africa that they were missing a good bet by not establishing a road to the famed Barberton goldfields.

Until that time the only existing means of travel was over the hunters' trails. But since the British had managed to maintain order in the sector, the merchants agreed to help finance the blazing of the trail which led through the western edge of Zululand, Ulundi and Magut and then on to Swaziland and the Transvaal.

Before long the road was in general use. Then trouble began. The people of the Dinuzulu tribe resented the restrictions placed upon them by the British. The friction continued as the years passed, with King Dinizulu ignoring the British and taking care of the affairs of his people as though no other form of government existed.

Then the tension erupted into flames.

A man named Mfokazana in the Dinuzulu tribe was sentenced to death by King Dinizulu for practicing witchcraft. The king dispatched an execution party to kill the condemned man, but when they arrived, he was not in his hut. In his place, the executioners killed Mfokazana's wife and confiscated all of his cattle and personal belongings.

The British magistrate was furious because the native king had taken it upon himself to order the witchdoctor's execution, and particularly because of the wanton murder of the man's wife.

He summoned Dinizulu to Eshowe, and on the 14th of November 1887, the magistrate said, "The people of the Dinuzulu must know, and all the Zulus must know, that the rule of the house of Shaka is a thing of the past, like water spilled on the ground. It is dead. Her Majesty the Queen and no one else rules Zululand."

He fined the king and, as a preventive measure, moved the seat of the magistracy to a high, wind-swept ridge called *kwaNongoma*, which means the *Place of the Diviner.* There, at a point where Rathbone's Road met a track coming up from the coast, a few buildings were erected and a force of fifty policemen were garrisoned.

The disgruntled Dinuzulu began to raid the cattle and

farms in the area and openly defied the magistrate. This led to many skirmishes, which in turn led to the British calling for more and more troops.

The Dinuzulu were routed and finally their king surrendered and a trial was held on the 16th of October, 1888. Although he had been promised amnesty, he was found guilty of high treason against the Crown and sentenced to ten years at St. Helena Island.

Dinizulu and his followers were returned to Durban on the 30th of December, 1897 in time to see, on that very same day, Zululand annexed to Natal, following the annexation of Tongaland five weeks before.

A few years later, after the king's release from prison, the government of Natal placed some additional taxes on the already oppressed Dinuzulu. That was the last straw. Dinuzulu once again recognized their King Dinizulu, who now banded together with the King of the Basuto and the leaders of various other tribes in the area.

Dinizulu returned to the old ways. Witchcraft was once again practiced and while Dinizulu pretended to be giving in to the government, he was secretly organizing the people of Zululand.

During one of these secret meetings, a government patrol crept up on Dinizulu and ambushed him and the other chieftains.

Dinizulu escaped, but cast a curse on the garrison. The curse was to become effective when they patroled the area of Rathbone's Road, at a place called Mashonengashoni or *That Which Disappears Without Disappearing.*

Shortly after this curse was cast, patrols of police began to vanish, never to be seen or heard from again.

Then Dinizulu was betrayed by some of his own followers and was once again tried for high treason. At the trial in Greytown, November 3, 1907, after more than 6,148 pages of evidence had been recorded, he was sent to prison again, this time for 4 years. As he was led away he vowed that many other patrols will become lost forever on Rathbone's Road.

With Dinizulu's imprisonment came the end of the abortive Zulu rebellion.

On the day of Dinizulu's death in exile in the Transvaal, October 18, 1913, he lifted his head and said to those around him, "So my struggle for my people's independence shall be remembered and never forgotten, and to show that I am merciful, I hereby release the souls of all those jungle

patrols which I have damned, except one; and from this day forth, that lost patrol will always be near Mashonenga-shoni, at the place of that which disappears without disappearing."

Exactly fifty years later, on the night of October 17, 1963, an American mining engineer and two British companions kept an unexpected rendezvous with the lost patrol. They did not understand what it was they had seen until they later learned the facts of the story as they have been related here.

As they were driving through the bush along what had been the Rathbone Road, at the time of the Zulu rebellion, some dirt which had become lodged in the carburetor caused the lorry to stall. While the American and one of his companions were attempting to clean out the gasoline line, at approximately seven o'clock, a strange rumbling sound was heard.

Gradually the sound grew louder and more distinct. At first it sounded like an approaching thunderstorm. Then, they saw what was causing it. Riding hell-bent for leather along the side of the road was a troop of mounted policemen, attired in the Zulu uniform of the late 1890's. Their eyes were fixed straight ahead and as they galloped by, led by a British officer, they were heard chanting:

"We have finished off the tribes.
Where will we go now to wage war?
Yes, where will we go now to wage war?
We have conquered all the kings.
Where will we go now to wage war?
We have finished off the tribes.
Where will we go now to wage war?
Yes, yes, yes! Where will we wage war?"

There was no question of what the three engineers saw and heard. Each confirms the others' story to the smallest detail.

Does the curse of King Dinizulu live on? And if so, how long will this lost patrol continue to ride Rathbone's Road?

THE HALLUCINATION THAT PREVENTED A TRAGEDY

GEORGE W. HAD felt that something was wrong with him for months now. Not that he was physically ill, but rather, he was afraid that something was happening to his mind.

When he finally told Julie, his wife, she laughed and said, "You've been working too hard, George. The trouble with you is that you're just too darned conscientious. Now I'm not complaining because you put in so many hours at the shoe store. I know it's a responsibility managing a big place like that, but you don't have to work like a slave. Now come over here and stretch out on the sofa, and tell me what's bothering you."

"No," George protested. "I can't do that. You're liable to think I'm some kind of a nut."

"Don't be silly," Julie insisted, her curiosity piqued. "I'm you're wife, aren't I?"

George looked at her and nodded. "Sure, but sometimes there are things a man has to keep to himself. Even from his wife."

"Perhaps that's one of the reasons you're so upset. Maybe if you told me, it'd help."

Although he wanted to tell her, he found that he could not do so. The dream he kept having over and over had been getting worse lately. He was even having the dream while he was awake!

Finally, unable any longer to carry the burden alone, he decided to tell his wife about the terrible, constant, nightmare.

Julie was appalled by his story, and begged him to see a psychiatrist. A few weeks later George consented to make an appointment, but he kept putting it off because he thought the whole thing was foolish—this business of going to a man who just sat and listened to you talk, and then decided, from what you said, that there was something wrong with your head.

But then again, perhaps something *was* the matter and he had better try to do something about it.

After the psychiatrist assured George that nothing he said would be repeated to his wife, George managed to relax somewhat and settled back in the arm chair facing the doctor, surprised that there were no couches in evidence.

"Now, George," the doctor said. "Tell me your problem."

George looked at the psychiatrist with a wary eye. "Suppose what I tell you is so whacky that you decide I'm really a nut, then what?"

"First let's find out what's bothering you," the doctor answered.

"Well, it's kind of hard to explain. You see, a few months ago I started having this dream. It would be so terrible that I'd wake up and not be able to go back to sleep. I never could seem to get the point of it though. At first, I couldn't even describe the thing I saw. But as time went on, I could see it clearly. A gigantic dragon, it was—it is. Breathes out fire and smoke and chases me all over the place. I even quit smoking when I started to have the nightmare, it frightened me that much."

"Go on. What else can you tell me about this dream?"

"That's the strangest thing of all. Suddenly, I see myself being chased into a hospital. I'm in a bed in a huge ward with dozens of other beds up and down both aisles as far as the eye can see. Everybody there has cancer, in one form or another."

"And what do *you* have?" the doctor inquired quietly, his eyes keen with interest.

George shrugged, lifted his hands from the arms of the chair and dropped them again. "I don't know what I have, doctor. That's the funny part. The dragon suddenly starts sneaking down the corridor between all the hospital beds. He comes over to where I am lying and starts breathing smoke and fire at me. Then, while I am waving away the smoke and trying not to choke, all of the other beds start to catch on fire and burn. Everyone in the ward is burning up, but me. I start running away, and again, the dragon chases me." George paused for breath, as if the telling of his nightmare had been a supreme effort that had sapped him of all his strength.

"Well, doctor," George asked, smiling, "what's the verdict? Am I nuts or am I nuts?"

The psychiatrist did not think it amusing. He made several notes and asked, without looking up, "You say you see this dragon chasing you in the daytime now, when you're not in bed asleep?"

"Yes. Sometimes when I'm on the bus going to work. At other times, I can see the thing coming for me when I'm downtown waiting to cross the street. Once, I saw it coming toward me just when the light turned red. I dashed out into

the street without thinking and nearly got killed by a speeding car. It sure would have chased me into a hospital then, wouldn't it?" Misery etched on his face, he added, "It's awful, doctor."

"And every night you have the same dream?"

"Yes. Every time it starts the dragon chases me into the hospital."

"Have you had a physical check-up lately?"

"Yes. I was okay."

"Were you at the cancer clinic? I mean, did you go through any tests there?"

"I wasn't there." George eyed the doctor and grinned. "Don't tell me you think I've got this nightmare because I'm secretly afraid that maybe I've got cancer."

The doctor looked at him quizzically. "Well, don't we all wonder about that at one time or another?"

George got the point and slowly began to nod. "That's a good idea, doctor. Think I'll do just that, take some tests. Who knows, maybe I have been worrying too much about cancer lately. With all the stuff in the papers—like you said, doesn't everybody?"

That night, for the first time in months, there was no nightmare.

A few days later, feeling relaxed and at peace with the world, George engineered a sick leave and entered the hospital for a series of tests.

After the tests had been completed George said to his wife, who was visiting him, "Gosh, hon, I haven't had that dream once since I saw the psychiatrist. You know, I should've listened to you long ago. But—well—you know how it is."

But Julie was not to know, and neither was George.

After the motives for the nightmare had been explained away by logic and reasoning and psychology, by all the rules George should not have had another hallucination about the fire-breathing dragon again.

But he *was* to have another nightmare later that day, after his wife left him in his private room to go home.

Shortly after dinner the nurse came into George's room and said, "If you're lonely in here, would you like to be moved into the ward? You'll have plenty of company and it won't be so boring."

George nodded sleepily. He had been up that morning before dawn and now that the ordeal of the test was over he

felt emotionally drained and weary. "Yes," he yawned. "I'd like that."

"Very well," the nurse said. "As soon as the orderly comes back on duty after his supper, I'll see that he moves you."

George smiled, closed his eyes, and fell asleep. Although he didn't yet know the results of the test, it was a sound, peaceful sleep, completely free of tension and fear and anxiety. He was barely aware that he had been moved on a rolling stretcher to a ward.

But his peace of mind was to be short-lived.

All of a sudden there was the nightmare all over again. But this time it was more real than ever.

George woke up in darkness. The flames—from the dragon? —could be seen lancing through the night at him. He felt himself sweating and choking as he jumped out of bed, his hospital gown trailing behind him as he ran toward the exit in the center wall of the huge ward.

This time, however, he was actually living in a re-creation of the hallucination. A fire had broken out in the ward! Terrified, he ran into the corridor toward the nurses' station, yelling at the top of his lungs.

Bedlam broke loose. The hospital night staff appeared almost immediately with extinguishers. The ambulatory patients from the ward were pouring into the corridor, helping those who needed help, as great clouds of smoke whirled around them.

Within moments, with everyone pitching in, the fire was brought under control. Miraculously all the patients had been moved to safety.

Later, George was to realize that the dragon-dream was a precognition, a vision of the real-life nightmare to come. If he had not awakened when he did and given the alarm, most of the patients, asleep in their beds, would have perished, trapped as they were in the huge ward. The fire (which had been caused by one of the patients sneaking a smoke and falling asleep with the cigarette in his hand) would have spread like wildfire. George himself might have died in the fire had it not been for the vivid realism of the dragon.

The next day, after the excitement died down and the results of the series of tests were found to be negative, George returned home with a clean bill of health. Now, only one thing remained for him to do: there was the appointment with the psychiatrist to be kept.

When George excitedly told the doctor about the fire and

pointed out the almost identical details in his dreams, the doctor asked, "And that was the last time you had the hallucination—the night of the fire?"

George laughed. "That's right. I haven't seen the dragon since. I owe him a vote of thanks for saving my life."

The doctor fell silent. After a while, he said, "Surely, now that you've come to realize that the cause of your hallucination was the anxiety and tension and fear you had built up worrying about whether or not you had cancer, you don't actually believe that the nightmare was extrasensory precognition, do you?"

The patient looked at his doctor and smiled. "If it happened to you, doctor, wouldn't you believe it?"

The psychiatrist stood up and extended his hand in a friendly gesture of dismissal. George grasped it heartily.

Finally the doctor answered. "Under those circumstances, perhaps I'd believe it too. Goodbye and goodluck, and don't have any more hallucinations, will you?"

THE RIFLEMAN KEPT SHOOTING AFTER DEATH

THE SCENE, a beachhead in the Marshall Islands during World War II. A company of Marines were pinned down in the open by the withering fire coming from the jungle beyond. During the three days of savage fighting when everything they had had been hurled at the dug-in enemy, the Marines had made little headway.

Since they had to reach the cover of the jungle, where they would be in a better position to drive the Japanese back, the Marine commander decided on a daring plan. He would order his rag-tag company to fan out during the night and tighten up the holes in their line. This would give the impression to the Japanese that they had managed to reinforce their spearhead during the night. Hence, it was hoped that with his men stretched along a wider perimeter of beach, they might then effect a break-through and breech the enemy's lines.

As the squads were fanning out during the night, crawling on their bellies from foxhole to foxhole, the NCO's had been ordered to see that burial details were put to work interring the dead in shallow graves scooped out in the sand.

A lean, battle-scarred gunnery sergeant and a private found themselves burying one of their buddies, who had

been killed on the first day. They muttered a little service between themselves and silently covered their friend, burying him where he had fallen, in his own foxhole.

At dawn the rifle fire began again.

With death pinging into the sand all around them, the gunnery sergeant and the private dug in deeper and managed to keep themselves well fortified.

However, during the day, the Japanese had succeeded in chopping down too many of the marine sharpshooters between the gunnery sergeant and his buddy, and the rest of their company. Before long, as the white blaze of the sun beat down on them, it became obvious that the Japanese were creeping forward from the jungle, getting their machine guns into position to work down along the horseshoe shape of the beach and open fire upon the exposed flank of the Marines.

The gunnery sergeant, who was a full-blooded Indian called *Two-knives*, single-handedly went after the camouflaged Japanese and one by one annihilated them with bayonet and rifle slug. But what he counted on the most, the element of surprise, failed him. The Japanese saw what he was trying to do and hidden snipers in the trees began to zero-in on him.

The private, who had been right behind *Two-knives* covering him during the meleé, was in a bad position and could not expose himself to the snipers. He did the best he could, firing blind and hugging the sand, but the snipers continued to fire at the Indian despite this.

All of a sudden another rifle was heard from behind the two Americans, shooting at the snipers. With the second shot, a scream was heard from the trees and the body of one of the Japanese snipers crashed down into the jungle underbrush.

The private and *Two-knives* emitted cheers and turned to see who had come to their aid. Both men froze in disbelief.

The grey, cadaverous face of a Marine, his entire body coated with damp sand, appeared over a rise, cheek against the stock of his M1 Garand. Two more shots rang out in quick succession and the ping of the ejecting clip could be heard. A scream answered and the second Japanese sniper slid down from his place of concealment, jerking in the last throes of life as he died.

The wondering eyes of the two Marines turned once again to gape at the dead rifleman. It was their friend, the

sergeant they had buried the night before. But now the man was gone. Only the barrel of his rifle was seen, protruding from beneath the shallow grave of the foxhole in which he had died.

But before they could think clearly about the eerie incident that had saved their lives, the order was given down the line to begin the penetration of the enemy lines.

It was not until five days later when the island battle had been won, that *Two-knives* and the private returned to the shallow grave in which they had buried their fallen buddy. But when they got there, they found that the regular burial detail had been there already and buried him properly.

Two-knives refused to discuss what had happened. He merely looked at the private through those steely narrowed eyes and said, "My grandfather used to believe that a warrior who has died cannot go to the happy hunting grounds until he has finished the unhappy hunting he must do while on earth."

The private looked at him and then looked down at the freshly filled grave. He removed his helmet and with a grimy sleeve, mopped the sweat from his brow. He stood with his bared head bowed in a moment of silent tribute and Thanksgiving, and returned to the company bivouac.

Was it really their dead buddy, who could not rest in his shallow grave until he had "finished the unhappy hunting" he had to do on earth?

Who knows?

MOTHER AIDS INJURED SON 190 MILES AWAY

MRS. BARBERRA'S only son decided he'd make something of himself and the only way to accomplish that would be to leave home and find a job in the shipyard at Baltimore where, in those days of 1942-44, big-money was being earned.

But Mrs. Barberra did not want her son to leave home. She had two valid reasons for wanting him to stay in North Carolina with her. The first was that her eldest son had already given his life in the service of his country, and the second was that her son, Billy Joe, was only fifteen years old and he belonged in school instead of in a shipyard 190 miles away.

However, there was no reasoning with Billy Joe. His

daddy was working in the shipyard in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and he was doing real well. So why couldn't he follow in his father's footsteps?

He doctored up his birth certificate, went to Baltimore and got a job in the rigging department.

As a rigger-helper, Billy Joe had to see that the huge sheets of steel and great prefabricated sections of the ships under construction on the ways were attached securely to the steel cable ropes dangling from the cranes.

Billy Joe loved the work and he especially loved the adventure and daring attached to it, particularly when he was able to trolley back and forth between the ways on the huge cranes, or when he had a chance to ride the cargo up from the ground onto the decks of the ships seventy and a hundred feet above the ground.

Although he knew his mother would have had a stroke if she had known the risks he took every day, this did not faze him one iota. After all, he was a man now, wasn't he? He was big for his age, and though many of the men at the shipyard guessed that he was underage, due to the shortage in manpower the shipyard employment office looked the other way.

Although there were many men from all over the country working there, trying for the big-money, or attempting to stay out of the draft by working in a defense plant, still labor was at a premium. So it was not a bit unusual to find that after a few months, Billy Joe was not only to work overtime, sometimes working two shifts a day, but he had also begun to get raises in pay.

At times when hazardous jobs had to be undertaken, men from the rigging department were asked to volunteer. Billy Joe was always the first to step forward. He liked the danger and the excitement and the chance to prove himself a man among men, but most of all he liked the bonus for hazardous work the shipyard doled out.

On one day just after a ship had been launched and was ready for the trial run, it was learned that several seams had opened in the plates above the ship's engine room. The rigging department was called in and, of course, Billy Joe volunteered.

He entered the stack and lowered himself down into the hold with block and tackle while sitting on a small plank, or Jacob's ladder, a caulking chisel and air gun strapped to his body.

This time, Billy Joe welcomed the chance to work inside,

even if it was in a somewhat precarious position. It was cold and raining and rather unpleasant working on the outside, but in the great hull, despite the din of a hundred hammers and machines, he felt warm and comfortable—if hanging suspended fifteen feet above thirty-foot shafts could be called "comfortable."

Then it happened . . . Billy Joe got careless.

He swung a little too far out and the block and tackle gave way. He fell suddenly, and only by a miracle was he able to break his fall by seizing the airhose to the pneumatic chipping hammer.

He found himself dangling above the tanks, midway down, with no way to get out of there, except by swinging to and fro and leaping to a staging beneath the boat deck.

Just as he desperately swung himself toward it, the hose gave way. He plummeted toward the staging and, landing on it with a crash, Billy Joe screamed in pain and then lay still, unable to move, caught precariously between the two planks and an iron "dog" which had been welded to the hull.

And then a whistle blew—and the engine room below began to hum with activity as the great engines were started, their vibrations threatening to gradually shake down the planks upon which Billy Joe was sprawled high above. He could not be seen, he could not make himself heard, and so far no one had missed him.

Almost within minutes a miracle happened.

The yard foreman was in his office, speaking with a woman who was phoning long distance from a small town in North Carolina.

"Hey, Darcy," the foreman called, cupping one hand over the phone, "check with the rigging department and ask them to find a guy named Billy Joe Barberra. See if he's okay. The man's mother is on the phone . . . said she just had a vision that her son's hurt and needs help. Better take a couple of the boys with you. This gives me the shakes and we better check it out."

While the woman held the phone, the shipyard workers followed through on the whereabouts of her son. Suddenly there was pandemonium. Billy Joe was found, barely conscious. The stand-by ambulance was dispatched, while a rescue basket was hoisted by one of the cranes. The foreman and the rest of the workers watched in awed silence as a volunteer rigger and the basket stretcher were lowered into the stack of the ship.

Minutes later, amid cheers of relief, Billy Joe was gently lifted into the waiting ambulance, still in his stretcher basket.

When Mrs. Barberra arrived at the hospital that night, to find her son in traction but very much alive, the foreman of the shipyard was there too. He had been waiting for her; he had a question to ask her.

How did she know?

The answer he got was a mother's smile of gratitude and the words, "Don't ask me how I knew Billy Joe was in danger. I just knew. Maybe it was my woman's intuition—or maybe it's because I'm a mother and I trust in God Almighty."

THE MYSTERY PHONE CALL SAVED HIS LIFE

DAVE, A SALESMAN for a housewares jobber, had been calling on his customers along the West Coast when his car broke down in a small Oregon city. When he learned that a part had to be ordered from out of town which would most likely take several days to arrive, Dave decided to take a bus home, to San Francisco. Since it was Thursday afternoon and the weekend was almost upon him, why not? He could then return to Oregon, pick up his car, and resume his business calls first thing Monday morning.

After locking his sample cases in the trunk of his car, Dave walked to the bus station, nine blocks across town from the garage. To his dismay he learned that no through buses were due to depart for San Francisco until 9:47 P.M.

He walked out of the station and stood on the corner for a time wondering what to do. It was beginning to snow. Since he did not feel like walking all the way back to the car to get his overshoes, and because he would have a seven-hour wait, he decided the best thing to do would be to pick up a couple of books at the newsstand and rent a room in the hotel across the street, where he could relax while waiting, spending his time reading or napping.

He entered the lobby of the small hotel, rented a room, took the key from the desk clerk and went up to the second floor where he let himself into his room. The room was small, but clean and pleasantly furnished. There was a telephone beside the bed and Dave deliberated for a moment, thinking he ought to phone his wife and tell her to expect him. No, on second thought, he thought, he would surprise her.

That settled, he took a shower and made himself comfortable on the bed. Six hours of waiting time remained.

An hour later the phone rang.

Dave sat up and blinked, wondering who could possibly be calling him. Except for the desk clerk, no one knew he was there, and he doubted if the man had even been able to decipher his handwriting on the register card.

"Yes?" he said into the receiver.

"I'm calling to tell you that it won't be necessary for you to take that bus after all. The part needed for your car can be found on a wreck in the local automobile salvage parts yard."

Before he had a chance to ask *who* had been calling, the phone went dead. This bothered Dave. Then he thought that perhaps it had been the mechanic from the garage. Maybe the man had found the part and tried to catch him at the bus station. Learning that no bus was leaving for a while, he might have taken a chance on the hotel across the street. Yes, Dave decided. That was probably what happened.

But he was wrong.

He picked up the phone again and called the garage.

After he identified himself, he said, "I was glad to hear that you were able to find the part you needed for my car at the automobile graveyard."

"How did you hear *that?*" came the retort.

"Didn't you just call me?"

"No, sir. No one from the garage called. How could we have? We didn't know where you had gone. You just said that you'd go home and would be back Monday afternoon, remember?"

"Well," Dave said, feeling more than just a little foolish, "I'm sorry. It must have been someone else. But now that the part has been located, how soon do you think you'll be able to repair the car?"

"I'll send someone to get the part right now. Let's see. Call me about 5 o'clock. It should be ready by then."

Dave hung up. He was puzzled about the strange call, but dismissed it from his mind. Perhaps someone else in the garage had called and had simply neglected to inform the mechanic.

At five, when he called, the mechanic informed him that the car was almost ready, but they could not finish it until early the next morning. "I promise you, sir, that it will be ready to roll by nine o'clock."

"Good. I'll be there to pick it up."

After he had dressed the next morning, Dave went down to the hotel lobby, bought a newspaper and then went outside to find a restaurant. It was 7:30 A.M.

A heavy snowfall had blanketed the city but the streets had already been cleared and the sidewalks were navigable enough for him to walk without overshoes. First, he would find a restaurant, and have something to eat. After that, he would get a shave in a barbershop and then go to get his car.

But Dave was neither to eat breakfast nor visit a barber shop that morning.

As soon as he sat down and ordered in the restaurant across from the hotel, he opened the newspaper and gasped in horror. Emblazoned across the front pages were photographs of a terrible tragedy.

There had been a bus wreck, the story said.

It was the bus he should have taken the night before!

There were no survivors. The bus had skidded off the road an hour after leaving the station and had crashed in a ravine, where it burst into flames.

Pale and visibly shaken, Dave dropped a dollar bill on the counter, picked up the newspaper and returned to the hotel. He went over to the desk clerk who had been on duty the day before, and asked, "Do you remember what time it was yesterday when I received that phone call?"

"I didn't put any calls through to your room yesterday. You made two outgoing calls, but there weren't any *incoming* calls," the clerk answered.

Dave felt his insides trembling. He gripped the paper in one hand and clutched the edge of the desk as for support. His knees felt rubbery, as if they were about to buckle under. "You're sure? You're absolutely sure that you did not ring my room about an hour after I checked in and went upstairs?"

"I couldn't be more certain."

"I don't know how you could be that positive. There must be a lot of other commercial travelers staying here. Can you remember the calls they received, too?"

"I can't," he smiled and replied. "But I'm sure that *you* didn't get any incoming calls because your phone is the only one in the house that isn't working. You can put calls through to the switchboard, but I can't ring you." He paused and pointed to a little slip of paper which had been taped to the switchboard. "See? The paper's there to remind me that the phone in your room won't ring. A repairman is supposed to fix it this morning."

Dave was speechless. He moved away from the desk, nodding his thanks and slowly sank down into a lounge chair, the paper spread before him in his trembling hands.

He read the account of the tragedy again, scarcely able to believe what he was reading. If the man from the garage had not phoned, and if the phone in his room wouldn't work, then *who* had called and *how* had the call been put through to the phone in his room?

Later that morning, Dave went to get his car. When he had paid the bill and was about to leave, the garage owner came over to him and said, "I hope you don't mind my asking, sir, but would you mind telling me *how* you found out that the automobile graveyard had the alternator to fit your car? When we called at the time you were towed in, they didn't have it. But fifteen minutes *after* we had called, a car of your make and model was brought in. What made you check back with them?"

Dave shrugged. He realized that he couldn't tell the man the truth. Who would ever believe it? Instead, he managed a wry smile and replied, "I just had a hunch, that's all."

That seemed to satisfy the garage owner. He grinned and stepped back as Dave started the engine. "Well, good luck. And take it easy on those roads. It's pretty rough in places."

"I intend to do just that," Dave said, driving away. And he meant it.

Although no one can explain the mystery of the phone call, the fact remains that Dave *did* receive a warning that saved his life.

THE BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIVER STYX

Reuben Williams, at 76, was not a religious man. He was a die-hard realist who did not believe in omens, predictions or dreams. As a product of the superstitious 1900s and the country people who carried so many old wives' tales of prophecies and strange happenings in his home state of New York, Reuben did not put much stock in what they said.

He was a hard working man all his life, the father of eleven fine children, a grandfather many times over, and he had almost lost track of his great-grandchildren. He was very close to one son-in-law, Jim Lunt, of whom he was particularly fond.

As fate would have it, Reuben was visiting a brother in

the northwest one winter during the trapping season when he had a strange dream. He saw his son-in-law Jim, dressed in a white suit, wearing a white carnation, laid out in a gleaming bronze casket.

He mentioned this to his brother while working with him, setting out the traps. After a few weeks and the advent of spring, a letter arrived. It bore the news of his son-in-law's tragic death.

Needless to say, Reuben was a shaken man. He recalled the dream vividly, then tried to explain it away. He could not. It had been too vivid, too real, to speak of as just so much poppycock.

The years passed. As people often do, Reuben and some old friends were sitting around one night talking idly about the boatman who would cross the River Styx and come to call for them when their time had come.

Reuben laughed at this. "Me?" he cried, shaking his big hand at them after poking himself in the chest with a thick thumb, "I will never ride on a boat. Never have in my life and never intend to, even when I die. So when that boatman comes for me, better send him away because I'm one landlubber who'll never step aboard any darned boat. I get seasick, that's why."

This began a running joke with the numerous members of the Williams' clan. For years they spoke of their resolute grandpa who was determined never to die because he would not go for a ride with the grim boatman.

Then, one day it happened. Grandpa Reuben Williams awoke one morning pale and shaken. He sat down at the breakfast table and did not touch his coffee or toast. His daughter and sons expressed concern and he finally shook his head and said, "Children, Jim has fixed it for me to join him on the other side of the river."

"*That* river?" one of them asked. Reuben nodded.

Everyone exchanged looks of incredulity. Finally, his grandson asked in a meek voice, "Grandpa, how can you go over *there* if you won't ride on the boat?" There was no derision in their voices; they knew better.

The joke forgotten, Grandpa Reuben Williams had a faraway look in his usually merry eyes as he replied, "I had this dream. I saw Jim. He was standing on the other side. And my, did he look fine, too! All dressed up he was, wearing that white suit and a pretty carnation right there in his button hole. Yes, he sure looked fine. He was pointing toward me as if to get me to notice a big bridge. It was built up like

an arch, but it wasn't finished. It was like halfway up in the air. Then Jim called out to me, 'Dad,' he said, 'this bridge is being built especially for you. In seven days and seven nights it'll be all finished. Then you can come on across.' "

After Reuben Williams had told his family of the strange dream, he looked pale and shaken. He had to be helped up from the table. Seven days and seven nights later, precisely as he had stated, Grandpa Reuben closed his eyes for the last time. And as a smile crossed over the genial face, he seemed to be pleased, as though he enjoyed having it *his* way across the river Styx.

HIS SISTER'S VOICE CALLED HIM BACK FROM THE DEAD

AT TIMES there is a closer affinity between a brother and sister than other blood relatives. And sometimes that affinity is a bond that defies even the forces of death.

One such incident occurred to young Thomas Kelly in 1918, during World War I.

Tom, who was 17 years of age at the time, was fighting in the front lines with General Pershing's Army when his sister Lillian, received a telegram stating that he had been killed in action.

Lil's first reaction was that of utter disbelief. However, as soon as she could, she went to Washington, D.C. to verify the telegram. "I don't care what you say," Lil adamantly told the Army headquarters staff a few weeks later in the capitol. "I know my brother Tom is still alive and that he hasn't been killed in action as you say."

After a lengthy investigation had been made as a direct result of Lil's insistence, it was learned that the telegram had been sent in error. Her brother Tom was still very much alive.

Shortly thereafter, a letter reached Lillian which had been written after the erroneous telegram was sent. Tom was well and happy, and although he had been gassed, he was recuperating in Coblenz, Germany, in the field hospital there.

"The only thing wrong with me," Tom had cheerfully written, "seems to be my throat. The doctors say that if it doesn't stop giving me trouble, my tonsils may have to come out. Now isn't *that* a laughable thing for a grown man and

a soldier to have wrong with him? Especially an 18-year-old vet like me, a sergeant with General Pershing's personal staff, now."

Proud of her brother, Lil showed his letter to everyone they knew. She had followed her brother's career like any doting sister would and now she was even more proud of him than ever because he had been promoted to a sergeant in the field!

Several long months elapsed. The war was over. Johnnies from all over Europe were marching home again. But not Tom. He was still in the Coblenz Army hospital, still suffering from the effects of the gassing he had received while at Mt. Kemmel in Belgium.

It was in the spring of 1919 when Tom Kelly was sent into surgery for a tonsilectomy—a routine, minor operation.

However, something went wrong and after the operation Tom began to hemorrhage. Nurses were dispatched to summon the doctors. One look at the young sergeant's condition and Tom was rushed back into surgery.

Despite all efforts to stop the excessive bleeding, Tom's condition worsened. Although anaesthetized, he was kept conscious, and was fully aware of the doctors working over him. He could see their masked faces, their intense eyes in a semi-circle around him.

Then a cloudy haze began to envelope his consciousness. Tom got the feeling that he was in a boat. He closed his eyes, and when he opened them, or thought he opened them, he saw he was in the back of a shallow boat. In the bow stood a man dressed in a sackcloth shroud. He was poling the boat across a great river toward an ominous dark shore. Behind him were the lights of a vast city. The lights were becoming dimmer and dimmer as the little boat continued toward the foreboding shore opposite.

Suddenly Tom was aware of his sister's voice. She seemed to be screaming at the top of her lungs from the shores of the lighted city behind him.

"Tom," she cried, "Tom, come back! Do you hear, Tom? I want you to come back this minute!"

And then an incredible thing happened. The man rowing the boat began to reverse direction. Turning around, he poled it toward the city again. And as Tom raised his face he saw Lillian standing on the shore, her arms outstretched to him, beckoning and calling. She was wearing a familiar old dress, one that he had always liked and teased her about when he lived at home.

Suddenly the vision faded and Tom grew aware of the nurse at his side. The operation was over, and he was back in his room. As the nurse applied ice to his lips he shifted his eyes, and from beyond the window he could see the first streaks of daylight as a new day dawned.

Just as the warm sun began to bathe the hospital room in its golden rays, the house surgeon entered and halted in the doorway abruptly, as though unable to believe his eyes. Then a broad smile came to his face as he crossed over to the bed and inquired, "How are you feeling, son?"

"Tired," Tom whispered, "but okay."

The doctor turned to the nurse. His look seemed to say, "We didn't expect to see *him* alive, did we?"

Long after Tom's discharge from the army and the hospital, when he and his sister met again in Florida, she listened to the stories of his war experiences and, while reminiscing, as sisters are wont to do, told him a strange story: "You know, Tom, I always wanted to write you about this, but I supposed you would have thought it was silly of me."

"One night, in the spring of 1919, I dreamed I was wearing an old dress, one with ribbons on the sleeves that you always liked. I dreamed I put on the dress to come and see you, but you were way out on a river, disappearing from view in a boat. There was a man in the boat with you, wearing a grey cloak. I got the strangest feeling that I'd never see you again and I kept calling and hollering for you to come back. The man in the boat didn't say anything, but he rowed you back to shore. Then, when you got off the boat you waved and laughed and said, 'I'll see you again sometime, Lil,' and then you went away. Isn't that the strangest thing, Tom? I wonder what it meant."

Tom Kelly merely smiled and said nothing. He knew what her dream meant, and he knew the meaning of the dream he'd had in the hospital, when he heard his beloved sister's voice calling him back from the dead.

Call it coincidence; call it what you will, but it actually did happen to Sgt. Tom Kelly, a man who was later destined to become the Sheriff of Miami, Dade County, Florida; a man who was to distinguish himself as one of the most honest and upright public servants in the history of that community.

Even today, former Sheriff Tom Kelly remembers the dream clearly. He doesn't try to explain it; he can't. He can only accept it for what it was—a supernatural experience beyond human understanding.

THE MOTHER WHO RETURNED TO CHANGE HER SON'S LIFE

ADDISON WAS ten years of age when his mother died. However, this did not mean that he had been too young to remember her as he grew older. Quite the contrary. Addison cherished his memories and as he reached his teens he often found himself secretly asking, "Would mother have approved of this? Would mother have been proud of me if I would have done that?"

Although his father was rarely at home—his profession as a geologist took him to the far corners of the earth—young Addison had never felt "alone." His mother had always been with him in thought and spirit. It was she who had first planted the seed in his mind concerning the profession of law for his future. However, when the time came for him to pursue the study in college, he found it was not at all to his liking or taste.

Early one Saturday morning he found himself alone with his thoughts in the vast university library. He had all but decided to chuck the law studies, but found that he just couldn't, because it had been his mother's hope for him. Also, if he *did* abandon his studies, what *else* was there for him?

Without quite knowing why, Addison began to wander through the book stacks in the deserted library. He casually glanced at the titles of the books, wondering if there might be some other course of study which he might find to read about that would lead him to a professional career.

Then, a strange thing happened. As Addison stood in the aisles between the towering shelves of books, he happened to look up and saw, materializing out of the sunbeams shining through one of the windows, a strange apparition.

He stared in amazement as he recognized his mother smiling at him and pointing toward a book. Rubbing his eyes in disbelief, Addison looked again as the apparition continued to smile and point at the book.

"You want me to read that, is that what you want?" he stammered.

The figure nodded, smiled and then vanished. Dumbfounded, Addison remained frozen to the spot, calling, "Mother, Mother—was that really you, Mother?"

A moment later, one of the librarians appeared around the book stacks, standing right where he had seen the spectre. "Young man," she said in a hushed voice, "will you please keep silent?"

He blinked and nodded in embarrassment. Then he went toward the book at which the apparition had pointed, took it down from the shelf and opened it. It was a work dealing with a study of the (then) relatively new field of psychiatry. It told of the need for psychiatrists, and also dealt with some of the problems faced by the profession.

Fascinated, the young man read the work from cover to cover that Saturday morning. When he had finished reading, he had made up his mind. First, he would turn to the study of medicine. Next, he would go after a doctorate in psychology, interning at the local state mental hospital.

Young Addison made his plans and carried them out. He was graduated in the 1930s and has distinguished himself as a leading psychiatrist since then, achieving world-wide recognition in his field.

Although Addison later professed interest in a study of parapsychology, few psychiatrists are willing to admit that it is a field worthy of research. Unfortunately, when he has mentioned the "visitation" of his mother's spirit to confidantes in the past, they very kindly suggested that he abstain from talking about it.

Nonetheless the fact remains. Had it not been for this strange visitation of his mother's image pointing toward the book that was to influence him so greatly, the world might have been a little poorer in the way of scientific achievements which young Addison was later destined to contribute.

Call the apparition what you will. The truth is that it was *seen* and it influenced the career of a promising young man.

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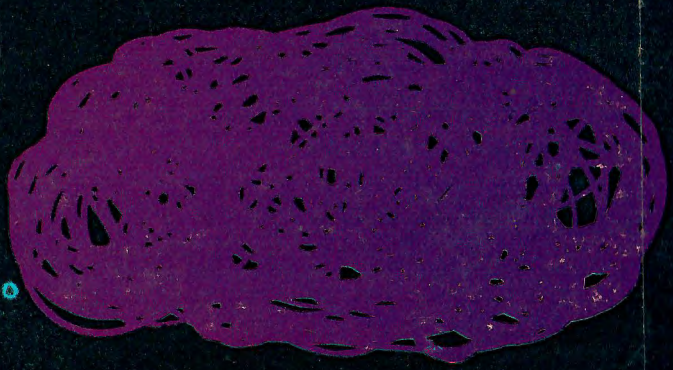
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